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Luke 24:13-35  
April 7, 2024

### **What Are You Discussing?**

One of the things that you MUST in Paris is see Leonardo DaVinci's famous painting of the Mona Lisa in the Louvre Museum. Has anyone ever had the opportunity to see her? What one might be surprised by is how underwhelming and disappointing it is.

The picture is quite small and removed from the viewers because of past vandalism. She is now safely secured behind glass and you can only see it from a distance. On top of that, with everyone having cell phones today, raised high in the air to snap that infamous smile, all you can see are hands in the air and a tiny glimpse of the picture itself.

Not at all the art appreciation experience I was expecting.

Now I could have walked away, left the Louvre, head down cast, knowing that my one chance to sit under her gaze and be mesmerized by her smile was gone. But then I would have missed all the other incredible artwork that the Louvre has to offer.

Instead, I needed to open my eyes and embrace the art that was all around me.

I believe the disciples in our story today were also dealing with some unmet expectations of Jesus, their beloved rabbi. It was the same day that Jesus rose from the grave and two of them were walking back from Jerusalem to their home in Emmaus, about a seven mile journey. As one would expect, they were discussing all that they had witnessed over that past three days in Jerusalem, trying to make sense of it all. I guess it's what we all try to do after we've witnessed some tragic event ourselves.

It was then that they encountered the resurrected Jesus.

Join me as we read about this in Luke 24:13-35.

**13** Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. **14** They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. **15** As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; **16** but they were kept from recognizing him.

**17** He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast. **18** One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

**19** “What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. **20** The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; **21** 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. **22** In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning **23** but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. **24** Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

**25** He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

**28** As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. **29** 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.

**30** When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. **31** Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. **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?”

**33** They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together **34** and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” **35** Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Let us pray. Prayer of Illumination.

There are a few things that I want to explore as we consider Jesus’ question to these two disciples about “What are you discussing as you walk along the way?”

I want to begin by answering who these two disciples were? What might have kept them from recognizing Jesus? What were they actually discussing as they walked? How did Jesus respond to their missed expectations? What then opened their eyes to Jesus’ real presence among them? What was their response to having their eyes opened? And finally, what might the Spirit of Jesus be asking of us today?

Today’s text tells us clearly that one of the disciples was named Cleopas. While we aren’t for certain who the other one might have been, I think that John 19 gives us a clue.

John wrote of the crucifixion, “Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.”<sup>1</sup> There were three women named Mary. I wonder if Cleopas and Clopas were the same person. Which would have made the other person, Mary Cleopas’ wife who was also Jesus’ mother’s sister. So Cleopas and Mary would have been Jesus’ aunt and uncle. If that is true, then it makes the story all the more exciting, and believable since many of his family members didn’t believe that Jesus was the Son of God in the first place until long after his resurrection.

Cleopas and Mary were walking home after the news of Jesus’ resurrection, dumbfounded about everything that had just happened.

Have you ever been so caught up in conversation with someone following a tragic event that you were completely oblivious to the world around you? I think that was where these two were at the moment. Still shell shocked, and stuck in their grief.

Those certainly would have been legitimate reasons for why they didn’t recognize Jesus who had come up to walk alongside them.

The literal Greek translation of what happened here is “But the eyes of them were held, not knowing him.” The Greek word for knowing someone is *epiginosko*. It means to be fully acquainted with someone, to perceive or acknowledge.

So certainly shock and grief would have kept them from looking up at this stranger.

But more importantly, I think it was their failed expectations. They had high hopes for their nephew and now all those hopes were gone. Instead of embracing who he was in the moment, they kept waiting for “someday.”

Have we ever had expectations for someone or something that never came to be? Every child that is born has expectations of their parents that they will become something in their life. One of the things that I am learning is how to let go of those dreams and embrace what is, instead of what could have been. Because God is in the here and now, embracing what is, instead of lamenting something I had made up in my head for what I wanted to my children to become. So the first thing that kept them from recognizing Jesus was failed expectations.

Another thing that kept them from recognizing Jesus as the Messiah was that the text tells us that they didn’t know the scriptures about what was said about him. They had made up their own ideas based on the Gospel of Self. They were biblically ignorant.

They told Jesus in verse 19, that they were discussing “How Jesus was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God.” Firstly they misunderstood who Jesus was. Jesus wasn’t just any old prophet who did good things. He said, he was

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<sup>1</sup>John 19:25

the Son of God, the living Christ. You see one is just a man speaking for God. But Jesus claimed to be God speaking directly on behalf of the Father.

See how they told Jesus, “But we had hoped that Jesus was the one who was going to redeem Israel.” Again they confessed their expectations that Jesus would be the political Messiah that would take back Israel from Roman Occupation and restore Israel to its former splendor.

The Greek word for redeemed is *lutroo*. It means to ransom or buy back. To provide the security to save someone from a debt. But according to these two disciples, Jesus didn’t have the cash to pay.

Then they told him what the women had witnessed but that the men didn’t see. And in those days, even the women disciples weren’t considered credible witnesses, so their testimony wasn’t validated by Peter and John who had run to the tomb. “But him they did not see,” they said.

Jesus responded by rebuking them for their ignorance. Jesus said, “How foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken. Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” He called them out right then and there for not having their thinking caps on properly.

Then he opened the Scriptures to them and taught them about his real purpose. The Messiah had come not to redeem Israel and Make it Great Again, but to restore humankind in its relationship with God the Father. To pay the wages of sin, that all of us owe, so that we could have everlasting life. Being that Passover had just occurred, they should have understood that sin came at the cost and a sacrifice had to be made. But Jesus’ self sacrifice on the cross paid that debt once and for all humankind throughout the ages.

Imagine that Jesus encountered them as they were leaving Jerusalem for Emmaus, and that they were walking some seven miles, at a three mile per hour pace. It would have taken them about two and a half hours to reach their destination. That’s a good Bible Study length. Jesus could have covered a lot of theological ground in that time.

Something clearly was sparking within them. This person taught with such authority like one who actually knew God. Not just of God.

As they approached their village, it was starting to get late, So “they urged him strongly, ‘Stay with us, for it is nearly evening: the day is also over.’” Middle Eastern hospitality was such that traveling strangers were at the complete mercy of the weather and of the people’s hospitality. Either they slept outside in their cloaks or someone kindly invited them in.

The writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote, “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by doing so some people have entertained angels without knowing

it.”<sup>2</sup> These two happened to be entertaining the resurrected Jesus, the Son of the living God!

What opened their eyes to Jesus real presence was performing the very common act at the beginning of a meal of taking bread, breaking it, blessing it and giving it to the others at the table. Except it wasn't Jesus' place to do it. Remember he was the guest in Cleopas and Mary's home. Not the host. But in this moment, at the table, the roles reversed. Jesus became the host and Cleopas and Mary became the guests at Jesus' table. It would have be a kinesthetic practice that they had experienced many times before with Jesus. The physical action with his words reminded them of what Jesus would have done and said among them.

Their eyes were opened.

The Greek for their eyes being opened is *diagano*. It means to be thoroughly open as if newly born. Right after a baby is born, it looks up at it's mother with this sense of wonder and awe and says, "I know you. I haven't seen you before. But I've heard and felt you. I know you. But now I can see you." *Diagano*.

The text tells us that Jesus immediately disappeared from their sight. The Greek word used here is *aphantos*. It is the same root where we get the word *phantom*. It means to vanish or evaporate into thin air. Remember last week how I described Jesus vanishing or evaporating through the grave clothes and completely leaving them behind in the tomb as if they were still wrapped around him or later on walking through locked doors to appear to his disciples. This is Jesus' resurrected body.

It was recognizable, but different from his earthly body. The resurrected Jesus was no longer constrained by the physical limitations of time or space. This was how he could show up and disappear instantaneously. *Aphantos*.

Then we ask what was their response to having their eyes opened?

They exclaimed, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" The Greek word for burning is *kaio*. It means to set on fire, kindle, or consume. Something had started within them that hadn't experienced before. But now they were changed by this event.

So they got up at once and walked back seven miles to Jerusalem to tell the others what had occurred. Remember it was night time and one didn't typically travel at night because of the bandits and thieves that might attack them on the way. But fearlessly and empowered by this experience with Jesus, they went out and shared with the other disciples.

This is what happens my friends when we have authentic encounters with the resurrected Jesus. We fearlessly go out and tell everyone what had happened. Part

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<sup>2</sup> Hebrews 13:2

of it is helping us make sense of what we experienced. The other part is that it is just too good of news to keep for ourselves.

And finally, we ask, what might the Spirit of Jesus be saying to us today?

The first thing is look for Jesus to show up in ways that we least expect. Especially consider those unmet expectations and disappointments where we prayed about something and it seemed like God didn't come through. Jesus might be wooing us, calling us, and drawing us near through them. Remember don't miss all the other beautiful art in the Louvre just because the Mona Lisa has let us down.

Learn to embrace what is and let the future rest in God's hand. We can trust that God will sort it all out in the end. And if it's not all sorted out yet, then it's not done yet. God might even still be at work creating something even more beautiful than we had originally imaged it could be.

Consider also whether grief is holding us back from seeing Jesus today. Remember how Mary Magdalene was so stuck in her grief that she didn't see Jesus who was right before her. But don't expect to unravel your grief on your own. It might take the help of a licensed professional counselor to help us sort through what's holding us back.

Maybe the Spirit of Jesus is encouraging us to know our Scriptures better. Do we know the life, ministry and words of Jesus? Do they inform everything we do, and say, and think as Christ followers? They should. If you haven't gotten one of the little books when you first came to Cascades on the Life and Ministry of Jesus... basically it is the four Gospels condensed down into one story... please ask Art or Claudia our door greeters to give you one today. Read that. Consume that. Make it part of you.

Get into a bible study with others. Dig into the Word and encounter Jesus for yourself. Learn what Jesus taught about himself and trust that the Holy Spirit who lives inside us will help us to understand what it means and how it applies to our lives today.

And finally, participate in the Body of Christ regularly. Because it is here where we feed spiritually off of Jesus body and blood, our eyes are opened to his real presence among us, and that we are then equipped to go out to do his good works and share the Good News

So may we be attentive to Jesus that we find in each other. May we be Jesus' witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. May we go out and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And may we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus will be with us always, even to the very end of the age.<sup>3</sup> Amen!

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<sup>3</sup> Matthew 28:19-20