

The Road to Emmaus



Call to worship: The Lord is Risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Hymn StF 310 Sing a song, sing a joyful song

Watch on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGU5zp2aHgM>

Sing a song, sing a joyful song to celebrate! x2!

*Jesus is alive, you know, he's risen from the dead!
He was crucified but now he's risen like he said.*

Jesus lives, yes He rose again,)
From the grave He came, let's celebrate!)x2

Angels came, yes, They moved the stone,)
Yes, they moved the stone, Let's celebrate!)x2

Good news for all, Let's spread the word,)
Tell your friends the news, Let's celebrate!)x2

Sing a song, sing a joyful song,)
sing a joyful song to celebrate!)x2

*Mark Johnson and Helen Johnson. New words
verses 2-4*

Prayer Loving God, we are here in the name of Christ. We are here to celebrate once more his resurrection, to rejoice once more at his victory over evil, hatred and death, to give thanks once more for his living presence with us now and always. **Lord of Life, we worship you!**

Reading **Luke 24:13-35 The Road to Emmaus** **1 Peter 1:3-9** **A Living Hope**

How wonderful to be celebrating worship in this easter season. And this Sunday has one of the most memorable accounts of the resurrection appearances. It's two ordinary people, we only know the name of one of them, Cleopas, and that he lives in Emmaus, 7 miles from Jerusalem. Luke captures the characters and the see-saw of emotions they were going through. For us today we know resurrection Day is the third day from crucifixion, but on that first Good Friday was no expectation of resurrection. There was a finality about the death of Jesus, despair and failure. The Passover festival had ended, and all the hopes and expectations dashed. We pick up the story when two of the friends of Jesus were on their way home after the festival. All the artwork of this story shows two male friends on this journey. But the scripture doesn't say that they are men. just friends of Jesus. Several commentators think it may have been husband and wife. After all they seemed to be living in the same house. John 19:25 describes 4 women keeping vigil by the cross of Jesus, Mary the mother of Jesus, his mother's sister, Mary Magdalene and Mary the wife of Clopas. What if either John or Luke slightly misspelt the name Clopas or Cleopas. It would fit with all details of the story and gives us a name for both the people.

Luke describes Jesus coming up to these two friends (or husband and wife) while they were talking and discussing on the journey. As Luke repeats this in verse 15, he uses a different word to describe the discussion which means to debate or to argue. It has been known in some households for husband and wife to argue. This couple were facing a situation of utter disappointment, things had not gone the way they had hoped, or expected. One of them could have been blaming the other for getting mixed up in this business of following Jesus – now they realised Jesus' mission was a failure. High hopes of the best Passover festival ever, with the liberation from the Roman oppressors, now shattered and going home sad and to pray that a new messiah would come soon.

Jesus asks them direct "What are you discussing together (or more likely arguing about) as you walk along? Luke describes them as stopping, looking downcast and Cleopas gobsmacked that this man appears ignorant of all that has happened in this last week. His response is a clear description of the gospel according to Cleopas. A rehearsal of the facts about Jesus. There is the ministry of Jesus in word and deed, the crucifixion which completed it and the hope of redemption which filled it with meaning. There is the conquered grave and the apostolic witness to that. There is everything except a personal word from the living Christ which would in turn make all the facts also live. Cleopas summed it up "but they did not see Jesus." So, hope had died. Cleopas said, "but we had hoped that he was the one who would redeem Israel." As Jesus is dead, so our hope is dead.

So not only the disciples who had gone to the tomb after the women but now these two on the Emmaus road, walking alongside Jesus, did not see Jesus. And yet he was walking with them. We can make excuses for them that they were walking into the setting sun. But I think the truth is they never had experienced a resurrection before nor thought it possible, I ask the question of myself, have I been blind to Jesus at work alongside me as these two were. Pray that our eyes may be open to see Jesus at work alongside us'.

Jesus then begins with devastating words “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!” Harsh shocking words that were potentially hurtful. The rest of the journey to Emmaus is a bible study from the law and the prophets. Jesus expounded all those old testament prophecies which point to Jesus. Luke tells us he went through them all – opening their eyes to see all the prophecies fulfilled.

These two on the Emmaus Road would have been enthralled and immersed in these scriptures, ones they knew, but now clearly applying to their friend Jesus. It was making sense. The journey and their feet no longer heavy with disappointment, but a lightness and excitement as their eyes were being opened. So much so that soon the journey was over, the long trudge with heavy hearts replaced with clear understanding, and almost joy. Jesus makes to go on, but Mary & Cleopas persuade Jesus to stop over for refreshments. Mary had probably bought food from Jerusalem, so food was quickly on the table. Cleopas, the host would normally have blessed the bread and shared it around, but Jesus rather presumptively took the bread and blessed it and broke it to share. It was Jesus. They recognised their hearts had been being warmed as Jesus had expounded the scriptures on the journey. Cleopas and Mary raced back to tell the others that they had seen Jesus. It would have been dark now but the seven miles was covered quickly. There was joy and a lightness of spirit. They found excited disciples who had also meet with Jesus. What Cleopas had described without believing was now a truth that they wanted to share to anyone who would listen. The hope that had died was alive and fresh.

Peter describes it in his letter “The Lord Jesus Christ, in his great mercy has given us new birth into a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”.

May this Easter season reinforce our believe in the risen Jesus. May our eyes be opened to see Jesus at work in us and others. May we know that the cross wasn't a mistake, a failed plan, but the precise plan made by God before the creation of the world. May our hearts be warmed as we understand more clearly what Jesus Christ has done for us. May we have that security that not only are our sins dealt with on the cross, but also death has been overcome and that for believers there is a certainty of heaven through the resurrection of Jesus?

For your reflection.

- 1) Who or what has helped your understanding of scripture? Do you have an open mind that can be taught?
- 2) Do you see God at work in others, do you recognise opportunities to share your experiences of Jesus?

Prayers

Lord Jesus Christ, in this world hopes are so often dashed and dreams so often broken, we remember today the faith in the future you brought to so many, both through your coming into the world and through your resurrection from the dead

Lord Jesus, where faith has died and dreams have faded
may hope flower again.

We remember how you appeared in all your risen glory:- in the garden, in the upstairs room, on the

Emmaus road, by the sea of Galilee and the dream was born again, the smouldering embers of faith rekindled.

Lord Jesus, where faith has died and dreams have faded,
may hope flower again.

Lord Jesus Christ, a world is waiting, hurting, longing, searching for hope, crying out for meaning, hungry for some reason to believe in the future. Come in your living power and bring new life to all

Lord Jesus, where faith has died and dreams have faded,
may hope flower again. Amen

Hymn StF 302 He has risen

Watch on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-76X_ywFwG4

He has risen, He has risen, He has risen, Jesus is alive.

When the life flowed from his body,
seemed like Jesus' mission failed.
But his sacrifice accomplished,
victory over sin and hell.

In the grave God did not leave him,
for his body to decay ;
raised to life, the great awakening,
Satan's power he overcame.

If there were no resurrection,
we ourselves could not be raised ;
but the Son of God is living,
so our hope is not in vain.

When the Lord rides out of heaven,
mighty angels at his side,
they will sound the final trumpet,
from the grave we shall arise.

He has given life immortal,
we shall see him face to face ;
through eternity we'll praise him,
Christ, the Champion of our faith.

Blessing : Living God, we have met you here, help us to meet you everywhere. **Go with us now and always.**

Where hopes are thwarted, faith destroyed, or life ended, bring resurrection. **Go with us now and always.**

Go with us into our world of need and help us to walk, through his Spirit, with the risen Christ.

Go with us now and always. Amen