



THE GOSPEL OF
Luke

SESSION OBJECTIVE: LUKE 24:13-35

To understand more about the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

More Divine Evidence

When thinking about the passages that point to the deity of Jesus Christ, Luke 24:13-35 is likely not the first on the list for most people, and yet it's another tremendous example of how in Christ, "the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9). The passage often referred to as "The Road to Emmaus" involves two men from the larger group of the disciples walking down a road towards "a village named Emmaus" (Lk. 24:13). The two men are greeted by Jesus on the road and proceed to have a lengthy discussion concerning everything that happened to Jesus. The caveat? They had no idea it was him. Somehow Jesus, in His resurrected body, was able to prevent their eyes from recognizing who He was, though they somehow intuited it was Him without being able to put words to it (Lk. 24:32). They only recognized Him when He allowed them to recognize Him (Lk. 24:30-31). This is a power only God possesses (Ps. 146:8). Jesus, with divine authority, is able to both prevent and enable people to recognize Him for who He truly is.

On the Road to Emmaus

Verse 13 begins the next narrative, and it occurs "that very day." This is, of course, the same day on which both the group of women and Peter visited the tomb to discover that Jesus was no longer there. Apparently, after the women came to report what they had seen to the disciples, and Peter had gone to verify their story, he returned to tell the rest of the disciples what he had seen. That same day, "two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem" (Lk. 24:13). Below is a brief breakdown of the key details in this story.

EMMAUS

The location of the village to which the two men were traveling is unclear. Luke gives the description that it was roughly “seven miles.” “Seven miles,” however, is literally “sixty stadiou” (σταδίου ἐξήκοντα) from Jerusalem. A *stadion* is about 607 feet, meaning the distance is approximately 6.8 miles, hence the translation of simply “seven miles.” The name “Emmaus” translated to “warm well.” The trouble is that, within seven miles of Jerusalem, there are several places that contain naturally occurring warm water wells. In truth, the precise location of Emmaus is not all that important; it’s the conversation the Lord has with the two men on the way to the village that is highlighted in Luke’s account.

TWO WITNESSES

A significant and easy-to-miss detail in Luke’s account is the two men act as two witnesses, which is important in Jewish law. For example, Numbers 35:30 says, “If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses. But no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” The plausibility of a murder charge could not be corroborated without at least two witnesses. Deuteronomy 19:15 goes on to clarify that essentially any crime could not be corroborated without at least two witnesses. For any kind of substantial claim to be believable, it required the witness of at least two people, hence the importance of the number of men; they both will unknowingly become the first two witnesses to the resurrection. Luke includes this detail, no doubt, to remind his readers of the strength of the resurrection claim. Per Jewish law, this was permissible in court.

PREVENTED

Verses 15 and 16 continue: “While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.” This is not the first time Luke has alluded to Jesus’ ability to prevent people from seeing, hearing, or understanding something. In Luke chapter 9, Jesus spoke to His disciples concerning His arrest and death, and verse 45 says, “But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying.” Again, in Luke chapter 18, Jesus speaks concerning not only His death, but resurrection and verse 34 says, “But they understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.” Now, on the road to Emmaus, Jesus again prevented them from understanding, this time from understanding who He was. This allowed for Him to walk alongside them and teach them of the necessity of His death without them being caught up in the moment.

BIG NEWS

In verse 17, Jesus asks the two men a question: “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” It continues: “And they stood still, looking sad.” Verse 18 reveals why they were sad and what they were talking about: “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?’” Apparently, the news of Jesus’ death was very widespread and had become quite the public controversy. Verse 21 indicates that the reason this was such big news was that the expectation of Jesus is that He was the Messiah, the one who would “redeem Israel.” To make matters even stranger, they continue in verses 22 and 24: “Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, 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. 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.” The men recall the events of verses 1 through 12.

A TEACHING MOMENT

In verses 25 through 27, Jesus takes the opportunity to explain to them that everything they had just experienced was precisely what the prophets said would happen, “beginning with Moses and all the

prophets” (Lk. 24:27). The death of Jesus and the empty tomb were not sad nor perplexing events, but predictable; they just simply had hard hearts and were slow to believe what was written in the Scriptures. This moment wherein Jesus was unpacking the Scriptures was evidently impactful to the two men. After “they drew near to the village,” Jesus “acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strong saying, ‘Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far from spent.’” Travel in the ancient world was not safe at night, but more than that, they were curious about the things he had previously said to them.

After sitting down at the table for a meal, “he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.” At this divinely appointed moment, Jesus allowed them to fully recognize who He was. It wasn’t that Jesus’ appearance suddenly changed, but that Jesus suddenly changed their eyes. It’s their response that indicates the weight of His words on the road: “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?’” (Lk. 24:32).

THE WITNESSES TESTIFY

Verses 33 and 35 indicate the two witnesses, confirmed by Jewish law, come back to testify concerning the resurrection of Jesus from the dead: “And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon! Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.” The two witnesses, one of whom was named Cleopas (Lk. 24:18), made known to them all that they had just experienced. The resurrection can now be legally corroborated. And again in verse 33, as in verse 9, Luke subtly reminds the readers that *the twelve* are now *the eleven* because of Judas’ betrayal.

What About Now?

One takeaway is the legal corroboration of the resurrection. The resurrection was not simply a tale told by one person to a group of people, but could be legally corroborated in court per Jewish law. Two witnesses could testify concerning Jesus’ rise from the grave. Another takeaway is the divine authority of God to either prevent people from seeing the truth or unveiling the truth to be fully seen. As it pertains to salvation, this reinforces our role in sharing the Gospel, and God’s role in granting belief through divine grace. We can only share the Gospel to others; we cannot believe it for them.

Study Questions

Day One

1. Read Luke 24:13-16. Who are the main characters of this passage? Where were they going? Who joins them? What was unique about Jesus in this passage?

2. Read Luke 24:17-18. Did the disciples recognize Jesus? Why? What did Jesus ask the men? How did they respond?

Day Two

1. Read Luke 24:19-24. What did Jesus ask them? What was their explanation? In your own words, summarize what they said to Jesus.

2. Read Luke 24:25-27. What did Jesus say to them in response? What did He do after that?

Day Three

1. Read Luke 24:28-29. What did Jesus do as they arrived at the village? What did they urge Jesus to do, and why?

2. Read Luke 24:30-31. What did Jesus do that opened the men's eyes? What happened after that?

Day Four

1. Read Luke 24:32. What did the men say in response to recognizing Him?

2. Read Luke 24:33-35. Where did the men go after this, and what did they do? Who did they tell?

Week 87 Discussion: An "Aha!" Moment

Over and over throughout Luke's Gospel we find individuals not able to comprehend the identity of Jesus. It isn't until they are given the ability to see or understand that they can comprehend him. Talk as a group about moments when you've had an "aha" moment, spiritually speaking.

1. Icebreaker: What's the biggest "aha" moment you've had as a Christian? Share with the group.
2. How long did it take you to come to faith after you first heard the Gospel? What finally clicked?
3. Have you ever tried to share Jesus with someone, and it was like they were incapable of understanding?
4. Is there anything you are currently struggling to comprehend? If so, what is it?
5. How do you pray for someone to come to an understanding of the Gospel? What does that prayer look like?

Takeaways:

1. Jesus appears to two men on a road leading to Emmaus, and they do not recognize him.
2. After teaching about himself, he enabled them to recognize him and then vanished.