

Road to Emmaus

Overview

Introduction

This series of studies follows the two disciples who went on a journey on Easter Sunday as they walked to Emmaus. As they started out, they knew much of the life and teaching of Jesus and yet they were wrestling with questions and doubts too. Soon though, they were walking with Jesus himself and as they studied scripture and walked together their eyes were opened to wonderful truths about who Jesus was and what he had done for them. So we invite you, across 6 sessions, to travel that journey with them, in the company of the same Jesus that you too may have your eyes opened in amazement and be empowered to share that good news with others.

Notes to the person leading the study

Question means a question to ask the group and discuss together and **Response** includes some ideas in response to questions/discussion. (Not all the questions have written responses, and this is intentional).

The questions are to guide you through the relevant Bible passages and themes of the passages, and I have provided some suggestions for application or actions after the sessions too. But, of course, there may be other questions or application/actions that will come up.

Series overview

Session 1 Setting Out

Session 2 Standing Still

Session 3 About Jesus of Nazareth

Session 4 But We Had Hoped

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Session 6 It is True

Road to Emmaus

Session 1 | Setting Out

In

Discuss

Ask members of the group to share their favourite walk. If they were in charge of organising a walk for everyone, where would they take us?

On their walk, where does the joy come? Is it about the journey or the destination? Open this discussion out into looking at that question in terms of life. What is more important, the journey or the destination?

Explain

Introduce this series of studies on the story of two disciples encountering Jesus after the Resurrection on Easter Sunday - the story known as 'The Road to Emmaus'.

In his book, 'Luke for Everyone', Tom Wright says, "*Learn to live inside this story and you will find it inexhaustible*".

Reflect

Give group members a time of quiet to reflect on what they know of this story, prepare for the study to come and offer themselves to be drawn into God's word so that, like these 2 disciples, they may know Jesus is travelling with them, whether they recognise Him or not.

Up

Read

Luke 24:13-35

Be careful not to rush the reading. It's a story familiar enough to miss the detail if hurried.

Explain

Today the study will focus on V 13-15:

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

The 'Same Day' is Easter Sunday. These two disciples have had a quite a day already.

We know one of them is called Cleopas (v18) but the other disciple is unnamed. Some theologians believe that this other disciple was Cleopas' wife who is referenced as one of the women at the cross in John 19:25, but there is much debate around both of these characters. What is clear is that they were not part of the twelve, so will not have experienced firsthand the events about which they have heard and are talking.

As Jesus came up and walked along with them, our two travelers were talking about '*everything that had happened*'. They were piecing together the narrative of all they had seen, experienced and heard of Jesus in order to try and make sense of it.

All Christians have an 'Easter Sunday moment' in their lives. Even those who have grown up in a Christian family and have always had a faith tend to know the point at which they accepted for themselves the invitation to see the death of Jesus on the cross and his resurrection to new life as an act of grace for them, with the forgiveness for sin and hope of eternal life that comes with that gift. Whether a sudden and dramatic event or a gradual growing understanding, we find ourselves at some point outside the empty tomb with the invitation to live life to full. And then as we journey through our Christian life, like our two disciples, we have times when we are filled with questions and doubts, hopes and dreams, confident in some ways, confused in others.

To get into the shoes of our travelers, we're going to think about our story of Jesus up to this point.

Activity

Invite group members to take a piece of paper and draw a squiggly line running top to bottom, left to right. Ask them to label the top with 'Born' and the end of the line 'Now'. Ask them to put a cross on the line roughly at the place that correctly indicates when on that time line they came to faith. If they haven't yet made this step, they could put a question mark at the point they begun to ask questions.

Use these 'maps' to share with each other the story of Jesus in each other's lives up to this point. Some might want to write/draw on their paper. Others may prefer to just tell, but for the purposes of this series, encourage the conversation to focus not so much on the before, but after. What is the group's experience of encountering Jesus and travelling through life with Him **after** becoming a Christian? After the 'Easter Sunday' of their lives?

Explain

Use this time of telling each other's stories to bring out the theme of the passage: The disciples had lived around and seen Jesus at work for 3 years, yet at this point they were not able to make sense of all that he had done and said. We will read how, by journeying with them, Jesus leads them from sadness to joy, from confusion to truth and the promise is that through the gift of His Holy Spirit, He will do the same for us on our journey.

Activity

Give the group a moment of time to write on their story maps any questions or prayers they would like to offer at this point as they look to journey with Jesus in the coming weeks.

Pray

A song to respond to or pray through as the group prays that the Lord would appear to you and walk with you: 'Your Nearness is our Good' by Micah/Michell Featuring Liz Vice. <https://youtu.be/lmvl3NvOC-w>

Out

Discuss

This is a good time for the group to think about those they know and care about who would not have a cross on the story map of their lives. There will be plenty of opportunity to think about, pray and act in love towards these people during this series. You may wish to share names in the group before giving group members a chance to pray for them.

Question

Who do you have daily conversations with?

Pray

For those people, that your discussions may been filled with hope and light.

Question

Who do you know who spends a lot of time travelling, for whatever purpose?

Pray

For them, that as they travel they might know Jesus travelling with them, whether they recognise Him or not. Be sure to tell them of your prayers.

Actions

Choose one or more of the following to do in the week ahead

- 1) Think of a walk you do every day. It may be a walk to work/shops/school or it may be very short, such as up the stairs or to the car. Decide that for the duration of this series you will sanctify it. Each time, you make that journey ask for Jesus to walk with you and to open your eyes to His presence and His truths.
- 2) Ask the Spirit to give you a clear opportunity this week to share a story of how your life has changed since you came to faith in Jesus.
- 3) Get in touch with a friend and simply ask the question, 'What's been happening?' Commit to listening and hearing what they say, praying that the Holy Spirit can use your friendship to make Himself known to them.
- 4) Do you know someone going on a journey? Make a travel pack for them with some sweets, puzzle book, travel toiletries and a copy of this story with a commitment to pray for them.

Road to Emmaus

2. Standing still

In

Discuss

What action did you do from last week?

Discuss

What do group members understand by the term, 'Spiritual Walk'? Is it a familiar term to them to explain the nature of discipleship? Do they find it helpful?

Discuss

Ask group members to consider, and share if they feel comfortable to do so, at what pace they are moving on their spiritual walk right now. Comfortable stroll? Excited running? Dutiful daily exercise? An exhausting slog? Slowly moving backwards?

Pray

Ask someone to pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit to lead the group into truth as you return to the passage.

Up

Read

Luke 24:13-35 - As before, being careful not to rush the reading.

Discuss

Draw the attention of the group to the 'Movement' that is a fundamental part of this story. Can they see that? Where do they see it? What movement words are used in the passage?

Activity

Get a large sheet of paper and draw a squiggly line running from top to bottom, side to side, labelling the top v13 and the bottom 'v35'.

Work as a group to draw a journey map of the story together, marking along it where the events happen.

For example, you may note the points where:

The disciples were moving as they travelled from Jerusalem.

Jesus was moving as they came together.

They walked as Jesus explained the scriptures.

Jesus went to continue moving when they reached their destination.

They sat at the table as Jesus broke the bread.

The disciples' response to recognising Jesus was to immediately begin moving again.

Explain

If it hasn't already come up in discussion, point the group to v17:

*¹⁷He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" **They stood still**, their faces downcast.*

Note that this is the only place in the story where everyone is stood still.

Discuss

What is the significance of this standing still? Draw attention to the additional detail that is given about 'their faces downcast'. Is it when we are downcast that we tend to stand still?

Question

Return to the question from the beginning of the study when people were asked to consider at what pace they are moving spiritually right now. Is there a section in the story/a point on the story map which you feel relates to your current rate of movement?

Are there those in the group, or those known by the group, that feel it is the point in the story where the travellers are stood still, their faces downcast point in the story that most resonates with them? Without seeking to 'solve' this, acknowledge this with care and highlight that Jesus didn't just walk on tutting, he stopped to be with the travellers as they stood still.

Pray

Use the following song to give space to reflect and move the group's sharing into the 'Out' section of the study.

'When I Found Jesus'" by Steph Macleod

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=WB-bORTKPrC>

Out

Question

Can you think of someone you know who is stood still, face downcast?

Pray

Take time to pray for these people

Question

Is there an issue in our community/culture that looks to be at a standstill in terms of God's Kingdom bringing freedom and redemption? Justice and Mercy?

Pray

For those with power, passion or influence, that they would become conscious of Jesus' presence.

Actions

Choose one of more of the following actions for the week ahead:

- 1) Look at Psalm 130. Spend time in prayer and meditation on this, using any verses that resonate - asking the Holy Spirit to show you truths about how David sought to have his eyes lifted and get moving again. (There is a track based on a mediation of this psalm on HTL Worship Emanation 2 - <https://youtu.be/tivFYtTEUkM>)
- 2) Who in your life is downcast and stood still? Can you commit to be their companion this week? Make a decision to be in contact with them every day in a way appropriate to the relationship. Pray for the wisdom and insight you need to share the presence of Jesus you carry in your life in a clear and loving way.
- 3) Are you stood still and downcast? Choose to miss a lunch this week and use the time to go for a short walk, inviting Jesus to walk with you as you offer him the honesty of your thoughts. Speak with Him as you would speak with a friend.

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Session 3 | About Jesus of Nazareth

In

Discuss

What action did you do from last week? What came from it?

Discuss

Lead a time of discussion where group members share their birth place/origins/roots. Ask members to share, and to explain anything they are aware of in their personality/habits/lifestyle that grounds them in that place - dialect, accent, food preferences, language, culture, sports team affiliation etc.

Pray

Ask someone to pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit to lead the group into truth as you return to the passage.

Up

Read

Luke 24:13-35 - As before, being careful not to rush the reading.

Explain

As we pick up from our study last week, we re-join our two travellers, who are stood still and downcast. Jesus has asked them what they are discussing and appears not to know anything about all the 'things' that have been happening in Jerusalem. "What things?" He asks, to which the disciples respond with v19b-24:

^{19b}.... "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people.

²⁰The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him;

²¹but 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.

²²In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning

²³but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive.

²⁴Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."

Explain

It is interesting that the disciples talk about 'Jesus of Nazareth'. As 21st century Christians, we don't usually talk about him in this way, because for us the origins of the 'human' Jesus are less significant. But for the disciples who had been living with him and learning from him for the last 3 years, the Jesus they knew was inseparable from where he had come. They had gotten to know him as someone from Nazareth, rooted in a time and a place. Their lives moved alongside his as he moved throughout Israel, living out, preaching and proclaiming the Kingdom of God. At this point in their journey, they are having trouble reconciling what they know with the characteristics, nature and work of the 'divine' Jesus. They cannot square the miraculous accounts they are beginning to hear with the human from Nazareth they had come to know. It is this 'both/and' that Jesus will open their eyes to as they travel.

As Christians, we too have an experience of encountering Jesus both at a specific point of place and time, yet also as the divine. Whenever it may have been in our lives that we began to 'move' with him, we will have grown in an awareness of His presence in our earthly and human day-to-day life, whilst praising Him and knowing Him as part of the eternal God-head. It is by the work of the Holy Spirit, through scripture and revelation, that we grow in awareness not only of His plans and purposes for our earthly lives, but also of His eternal work and the Heavenly purposes for which He saved us.

Discuss

How do you feel about this? Do you feel Jesus is more your mate, a human you can't see but otherwise mostly like you, or do you think of Jesus in His heavenly brightness where there is no need for the sun because He gives all the light required? How do you hold his humanity and divinity in balance?

Activity

Ask the group to think about being on a walk together. As you are journeying, you find another traveller gets caught up the group and asks

"What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

"About Jesus of Nazareth," we reply.

"Go on..." our traveller says.

Give the group some silent time to write, 'The Things of Jesus' in the middle of a page and begin to put words or phrases around this that would form elements of their conversation with the traveller.

After some time, share these as a group - where are there similarities/differences between group member responses?

Discuss

Draw out of the group where the responses focus on the work of Jesus in our individual circumstances and where they focus on the eternal work of Jesus to redeem creation and lead humanity back into relationship with the Father. Is there a balance? Should there be?

Worship

Move into a time of thanks and praise for all that Jesus is, both to group members in their own lives, but also who He is eternally.

A song to respond to or pray through: "Behold" - Mission House

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

Out

Question

Who do you know who has not heard of the 'things' of Jesus. With reference to the discussions of the study, what 'things' do these individuals particularly need to know?

Question

What particular aspects of Jesus' humanity and His divine nature does our society as a whole need to hear at this moment? What areas could we be proclaiming His name into or over?

Pray

Take time to pray into both these areas.

Actions

Choose one of the following actions to do over the next week:

- 1) Spend some time reading, praying, praising through the great prayer of praise Paul writes in Philippians 2:5-11. How does Paul explain to his readers who Jesus is? Ask the Spirit to help you put your own prayer of praise into words that you can speak out to Jesus.
- 2) Choose a song/chorus that helps you to express who Jesus is to you. Can you choose a time to play it/sing it every day this week? Spend some minutes after each time to put your thoughts and praise into your own words.
- 3) Make a decision to share the 'things' of Jesus with someone this week. As you note your gratitude or affection for Him, or you ponder something of His divine nature, ask the Spirit to give you the name of someone to share these thoughts with, and the words to express them.

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Session 4 | But we had hoped

In

Discuss

What action did you do from last week? What came from it?

Discuss

Lead a time of discussion where group members share their places of birth/origins/roots. Ask members to share, and to explain anything they are aware of in their personality/habits/lifestyle that grounds them in that place - dialect, accent, food preferences, language, culture, sports team affiliation etc.

Pray

Ask someone to pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit to lead the group into truth as you return to the passage.

Up

Read

Luke 24:13-35 - As before, being careful not to rush the reading.

Explain

Last week we listened together as our 2 travellers told the 'stranger' of the 'things' of Jesus. This stranger seemed unaware of the events in Jerusalem. We know this is Jesus, but our travellers don't and they are being incredibly honest about what they have experienced, what they believe, what they understand and what they are struggling with. At the end of their explanation of the events, we read in verse 21 the key to their current struggles to believe, to keep their eyes up and to get going:

²¹but 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.

We know from our privileged position that their hopes were realised, but in the midst of the events themselves, they cannot see this and are filled with disappointment.

Discuss

As a group, can you think of other characters in the Bible who expressed disappointment at unfulfilled hopes, when actually their hopes were in the process of being realised?

Reponse

Abraham and Sarah

Joseph

Elijah

Miriam

Zechariah and Elizabeth

Martha and Mary after the death of Lazarus

Jairus as he was taking Jesus to heal his daughter

Explain

When you become a Christian and you accept the free gift of forgiveness and restored relationship with the Father, the gift of God to you as his beloved child is the Holy Spirit to lead you into truth, working in you that you might become more like Jesus and bear fruit in your life as you live it to the full.

One of the most significant expressions of this is 'Hope'. This crops up throughout the writings of the New Testament, for example:

"In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you"

(1 Peter 1:3–4).

For most Christians though, there are moments where they experience the disappointment of these travellers. New life and new faith brings "Easter Sunday" joy with hope that all will be redeemed. This is ultimately true but for all of us, there are areas of struggle and waiting in our lives that can lead us into a sense of disappointment. We will see next week how Jesus began to address the particular hopes of our travellers.

Question

Are there any areas of unfulfilled hope in your lives?

Discuss

Talk about who has come through their times of disappointment and can reflect on how God was clearly at work, even when it did not seem to be the case at the time.

Pray

A song to respond to or pray through: "Living Hope" - Phil Wickham

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=9f2FXxDVO6w>

(Be sensitive with this song if there have been deep disappointments expressed. Use the teaching of last week's session to explain that our disappointments are rooted in the lived day-to-day experience of the here and now. This song addresses the eternal truths of the Hope that Jesus won for us by living, dying and rising again. It is a declaration of faith beyond any current circumstances.)

Out

Discuss

Are there those known to the group whose faith has been rocked by disappointment or whose lives feel hopeless?

Pray

Name those people and pray for them.

Question

How can we bring hope to our friends and family this week?

Pray

For wisdom and inspiration for words and deeds that will communicate hope to those who need it in our lives.

There are plenty of situations in the world that appear hopeless to human eyes. Declare the Living Hope of Jesus over them and pray for His resurrection power to bring life.

Actions

Choose one of the following actions to do over the next week:

- 1) If you have disappointments, have you talked them over with the Lord? Read Psalm 42 and let it guide you in an honest conversation with God, moving from the words of the psalmist to your own.
- 2) Commit to pray for and be in touch with someone who you know is struggling with disappointment or hopelessness at the moment. You don't need to solve it, but to be there to offer words of hope and faith - perhaps a meal or other practical expression alongside your prayers.
- 3) There are many parts of the world where the eternal Living Hope of Jesus' victory is overshadowed by the challenges of daily living. Go on the opendoorsuk.org and read of their work. As the Lord prompts you, respond in action, prayer or giving as they work to bring the hope of glory to those who are struggling.

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Session 5 | All the Scriptures

In

Discuss

What action did you do from last week? What came from it?

Question

Can you think of books/films/plays/real life events where you see the truths of the gospel and salvation played out?

Response

E.g. Harry Potter/Lord of the Rings/Fairy tales/Bridge over the River Kwai/ Acts of heroism in war time/organ donation/ the natural seasons in creation etc.

Question

Can you give any examples from you own life where the work of salvation and redemption have been expressed to you through the lives and actions of others?

Pray

Ask someone to pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit to lead the group into truth as you return to the passage.

Up

Read

Luke 24:13-35 - As before, being careful not to rush the reading.

Explain

We looked last week at how the travelers' understanding of the 'things' of Jesus had led them to a place of disappointment and confusion. They had seen and witnessed and understood some of what the 'here and now' Jesus of Nazareth had done and said, but they were struggling to understand the 'Alpha and Omega' Jesus whose purpose had not been time and place narrow, but cosmic and eternal. It is this that he will begin to reveal to them as they set off moving again and continue to explain to them for hours and miles.

Explain

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.

The focus of this study is to see how Jesus lifted the eyes of the travelers and started moving with them by pointing them to the scriptures that spoke about Him, even though they didn't know it. You will need to be sensitive to the level of understanding in the group as to how you address this - the relationship between

Old and New Testament cannot be unpicked and resolved in a meeting!

It can be easy to read the Old Testament and the New Testament as two separate books telling two separate stories. The extreme danger of this is that we end up seeing two types of God - one vengeful and distant, the other loving and personal. We can associate the Old Testament with a primitive and violent people who were never good enough for God and were dealt with severely, whereas we see the New Testament as more relatable to our lives, with Jesus at the center bringing love, kindness and compassion.

This is not the case at all! There is deep mystery in both parts of God's story, much to wrestle with and much to challenge us but the Christian faith is that God never changes and always acts in a way consistent with His character. This is what Jesus now teaches the travelers on their journey. He explains all that happened to Him - His teaching, His life, His death, His resurrection - makes sense of all that has ever happened in human history and fulfils all that was ever promised.

There is an old saying about the Bible that can help us, "The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed." Led by the Holy Spirit, we can take our personal knowledge of the work of Jesus into the Old Testament and see illuminated the work of God in creation from first to last.

Discuss

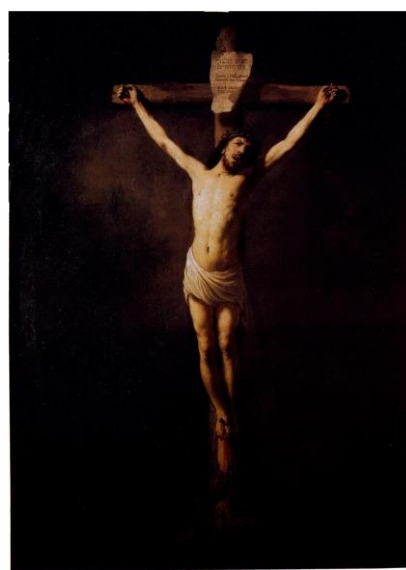
Ask if the group know of any Old Testament stories that for them are illuminated by the work of Jesus, or those that foretell what Jesus did in his life, death and resurrection to bring those events extra depth.

Read

Genesis 22:1-19

Explain

These events took place on a hill very close to the hill where Jesus was to be crucified many hundreds of years later. The artist Rembrandt painted key moments of both events: (Show these images - both can be found with a quick google image search)



Activity

Ask the group to imagine that Rembrandt, painting at a distance, had seen both events unfold at the same time. What

- 1) Links
- 2) Foretellings
- 3) Understanding
- 4) Similarities
- 5) Differences

would he have seen on both events?

You may wish to highlight or explore:

- 1) A Father's 'only Son'
- 2) The journey on a donkey
- 3) The Son carrying the wood for the sacrifice
- 4) The questions of the Son to the Father over the sacrifice
- 5) The raising of the hand to sacrifice the Son (the knife in Abraham's hand, the hammer in the Roman Soldier's)
- 6) God stopping one sacrifice, allowing the other to proceed
- 7) Neither Father withholding their Son, but only God the Father requiring of Himself to go through with it.
- 8) The thorns snaring the head of the sacrifice.
- 9) Abraham called that place, "On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided." and in time it was.

(If you feel this story is too challenging, you may wish to look instead at the story of the Bronze serpent - Numbers 21:4-9)

Question

How does this story enrich our understanding, whilst acknowledging the challenges.

Explain

Returning to our passage, that Jesus didn't just give the travellers an Old Testament and say, 'Read that, Thickos!', and then go off and leave them to it. He travelled with them, explaining and opening their eyes. We have the Holy Spirit to do the same. We talk with Him as we would to a friend, a teacher, a mentor, a wiser older brother/sister in the faith. The reading of scripture is a dialogue of seeking truth together in which our guide is God himself.

Pray

A song to respond to or pray through: "What a Beautiful name" - Hillsong - This song grounds the work of Jesus in all scripture and time - "You were the word at the beginning..." <https://youtube.com/watch?v=nQWFzMvCfLE>

Out

Explain

In recent weeks, we have been thinking about those who may be static in their spiritual walk or downcast through disappointment.

Pray

That those people would see Jesus in the world about them, the stories they read, the programmes they watch, the music they listen too - that he would be able to show himself to them and begin to lead them forward.

Question

How can we be like Jesus in this story to our friends and family this week? Can we bring words of truth and revelation?

Pray

Ask for specific words from scripture that we can share with them as we journey through the week.

Pray

For all those in our Church who teach us and open the scriptures to us. Pray for their protection, inspiration and wisdom as they seek to honour the gifts that God has given them.

Actions

Choose one of the following action to do in the week ahead

- 1) Pick an Old Testament story that you know well or a well known passage such as Psalm 23. Choose to read it each day this week, asking the Holy Spirit to guide you into understanding as to how the eternal truths it contains, relate to the personal work of Jesus in your own life.
- 2) Set an alarm on your phone for a time where you can grab a few moments each day. Choose someone to pray for and ask the Holy Spirit to give you a story/word/event from scripture that you can use to send a text of hope. You don't have to quote the verse word for word, put the truths in your own words to make the encouragement personal.
- 3) As you read scripture this week, take time at the end of your reading to pray, "Holy Spirit - where else in scripture shows these truths?" Allow the Spirit to guide your thoughts and make notes of any links or rabbit trails that you go on as you begin to make connections between different part of God's story.

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Session 6 | It is True

In

Discuss

What action did you do from last week? What came from it?

Question

Can you think of times when you didn't want whatever was happening to end? Is there somewhere where you feel you could stay forever and never get bored? How does it feel when you get a chance to tell others about it?

Question

Can you think of a time when that was true spiritually for you? Where everything just seemed to be clicking? Is anyone in that place now?

Pray

Ask someone to pray for the blessing of the Holy Spirit to lead the group into truth as you return to the passage.

Up

Read

Luke 24:13-35 - As before, being careful not to rush the reading.

Explain

We have been journeying with our travellers for several weeks now, looking at how their confusion at the events surrounding Jesus' death and resurrection had brought them to a standstill with their faces downcast. Jesus met them, listened to them, joined them, travelled with them and opened the scriptures to them that they might make it home, eat with Him and return to Jerusalem rejoicing, hearts burning - what a contrast there is in the two journeys!

Today as we look at these final verses, we are looking at the spiritual journey our travellers went on as they walked with Jesus, to help us think about our own travel through this story and where it might lead us.

Read Again

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

²⁹But 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.

³⁰When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

³¹Then 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.*

Activity

Get out the journey map from session 2, where we tracked the key events of the journey. Trace with your finger the journey from where the travellers met Jesus and stood still down to where they reached their home and then all the way back as they returned to Jerusalem.

Question

What have the disciples learned about the risen Jesus in the course of their journey.

Response

He can appear in different forms.

He will approach us and interact with us

He cares about our discussions - the things that matter to us, matter to him.

He will not leave us in our slowness of heart or with eyes downcast.

All scripture and creation points to him.

All the 'ifs' are removed from the law and the prophets in him.

The Old Testament must be read in the light of Jesus - it's about him.

He asks questions. 'What things?' (You may wish to explore that as the resurrected Son of God, he knew the answers, so why did he want it articulated? Why does God ask questions when he knows the answers?)

He will not force himself on us if we have gone as far as we want to. Do we urge him to stay or let him go on his way?

Jesus opens the scriptures

If Jesus is talking to you, your heart will burn within you.

Question

What is the significance of the breaking of bread? Is there significance in this as the point where they recognised Jesus and He chose to leave them?

Discuss

Ask the group if any of these points have also been their learning during this series of studies. What else has Jesus shown them?

Activity

Draw a 'map' of your own journey through this passage

Question

How have you found studying this story over the last 6 sessions?

Question

Do you feel you have been journeying with Jesus? Do you feel you know Him better or have travelled some distance over these weeks?

Explain

This encounter with Jesus compelled the disciples to share their home, to be in fellowship and to journey as they looked to tell others what had happened.

Question

What has this story and our journey over the last few sessions encouraged us to do?

Pray

A song to respond to or pray through: *Hallelujah Nkateko/Bohang Seema* sung by The University of Johannesburg Choir - This is a song of celebration of the work of Jesus, both eternal and in our current circumstances. Perhaps we can imagine our 2 travellers singing this as they returned to Jerusalem.

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=t2AHydMalv8>

Hallelujah nkateko (Hallelujah blessing)
Hau Yesu una matimba (Jesus has power)
Hiyena muhluri (He is the conqueror)
Valala vanga pfuka (Our enemies can rise)
Yeso utava hlula (Jesus will conquer them)
Hiyena muhluri (He is the conqueror)
(Repeat)
Hihlula himatimba (We conquer with the power)
Hallelujah nkateko (Hallelujah blessing)
Yeso wa hihlulela (Jesus conquers for us)
Hihlula himatimba (We conquer with the power)
Hiyo Hosi yahina (He is our Lord)

Hanwi tshembha muhluri (We trust in our conqueror)
Yena anga hluriwi (He cant be defeated)
Hi yena muhluri (He is the conqueror)
Namuntlha hi tsakile (Today we are joyous)
Swi dyoho swi herile (Our sins have passed away)
Hi yena muhluri (He is the conqueror)

Out

Activity

Share bread and wine (or nearest equivalent) together. As you do so, give thanks for all that the life, death and resurrection of Jesus means to you. Ask the Spirit to bless you with a knowledge of His presence as you eat and drink together.

Pray

Pray for each other as you journey on from this gathering into the week to come. By His spirit, Jesus does indeed promise to 'stay with us'.

Discuss

Are there those in our lives where we are called to be Jesus? Those who are travelling or stood still? On a journey of enquiry or looking for answers to the questions and disappointments in their lives?

Pray

Ask for ways to speak truth and light into these people's lives so that, without even knowing it, they may find themselves walking and living in the company of Jesus?

Actions

Choose one of these actions to do in the week ahead

- 1) Invite a friend for a coffee, a drink or a meal. Explain that you have been meeting with some church friends and have some homework you for which you need their help. In return for picking up the bill, can they listen as you explain your journey? You could invite them to ask their questions about Jesus.
- 2) Choose a book of the bible that you don't know too well - You could choose one of the letters of the New Testament or perhaps shorter Old Testament books such as Jonah, Ecclesiastes or Ruth. Over a number of weeks, invite Jesus, by his spirit, to go on a journey with you through the book. Walk slowly through it, asking Jesus to show you the truths and promises within it, linking it to other scriptures, that your heart may burn within you as you spend time with him.
- 3) As a group, plan a 7 mile (around 11km) walk to go on, finding an agreed date in the near future. You will need to make it inclusive so people can join/leave as appropriate to their mobility. You could use places such as Watermead Country park/Bradgate Park to make it circular. Invite your people of peace to join you for some or all, plan to finish somewhere - in someone's house if possible - for a meal.

During the walk pause every mile to consider one of the questions/topics discussed on this course so that it becomes more than just another walk. Be intentional about making it a journey with Jesus that ends with a deeper sense of His presence with you. You may wish to use the following structure:

Mile 1

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;

Talk about what has happened - what is our story of Jesus up to this point? Tell each other's stories and pray that the Lord would appear to you and walk with you.

Mile 2 - They stood still

Where are you with Jesus right now? Are you journeying? Are you with Him? Are you downcast? Do you feel He has gone on without you? Have you stood still at some event/occurrence/question that prevents you journeying on?

Mile 3

"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."

Imagine as you journey, a traveler asks you, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

About Jesus of Nazareth you reply...

"Go on..." Our traveller says.

What do you say about him?

Mile 4 - But we had hoped

Do you have hopes that have not been realised in your walk with Jesus? Do you look at what has happened in your life or the lives of those around you and struggle to believe that Jesus has lived up to the promise?

Mile 5

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.

Can you pick some Old Testament passages from Moses, the Prophets and the writings, and explain what was said in those scriptures concerning Jesus?

Mile 6 - Stay With Us

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.

Pray - Urge Jesus to stay with you. Where do you need him to rest with you, to bless you, to be with you in your homes. Where do you need him to lead? What journey do you need to be on to tell others of what you have seen/learnt/had revealed?

Mile 7 - Were our hearts not burning within us!

As the walk comes to an end and you head off for some food and time together, give thanks and praise for the walk, His presence with you and His promise to lead you into all that is to come.