



grow. pray. study.

April 12, 2026 Resurrection Stories, Ordinary Everyday Encounters

Scripture: Luke 24:28-35, NRSV

Two Discouraged Disciples and the Unrecognized Jesus

MONDAY 4.13.26 Luke 24:13-24

Luke's research ([Luke 1:3](#)) found this unique resurrection story that was in no other gospel. Jesus, unrecognized, walked with two disciples discussing recent events. They felt disillusioned ('we had hoped'—verse 21) and sad about the crucifixion. Some women had reported that Jesus' body wasn't in the tomb, but these two followers gave no sign they thought that meant Jesus was alive—just that it puzzled them.

- Scholar N. T. Wright noted something strange in the resurrection stories: “It wasn't simply that they couldn't recognize him.” In Matthew ([28:17](#)) and John ([20:14](#); [21:4, 12](#)), as here, people didn't know the risen Jesus at once. “Jesus' body, emerging from the tomb, had been transformed. It was the same, yet different—a mystery we shall perhaps never unravel until we ourselves share the same risen life.” * Do you long to share that risen life, even though parts of it are puzzling to us now? How does the promise of resurrection comfort you, even if you don't yet fully understand it?
- Cleopas, like the other disciples, still held fixed ideas of what the Messiah would be and do (cf. [Luke 9:44-45](#)). He expected a political rescuer, not a suffering servant who would rise from death. When have you found greater joy and peace after letting God challenge or overturn some fixed assumption that made it harder for you to see God at work today? What made letting go difficult?

Prayer: Loving Lord, when I feel discouraged, disillusioned, or filled with doubt, please join me on the road. It is particularly at those times that I need your living, loving presence with me. Open my eyes to recognize you. Amen.

* Wright, N. T., *Luke for Everyone* (New Testament for Everyone) (p. 295). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

Hearts on Fire as Jesus Reveals Himself

TUESDAY 4.14.26 Luke 24:25-35

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus interpreted for his dispirited followers “the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets.” Only when he broke and blessed the bread did they recognize him in a flash of insight and memory. His transformed body disappeared, but they joyfully realized their hearts had been “on fire” as Jesus explained the Hebrew Scriptures' deep message.

- Scholar William Barclay noted this story's central truth: Jesus has “the ability to make sense of things.” When Jesus talked with these disciples, “the meaning of life became clear and the darkness became light.... It is only in Jesus that, even in the bewildering times, we learn what life means.” * Can you recall a moment when you experienced inner quiet or relief about something painful in the light of Jesus' love and grace? How did that recognition change your perspective?
- The two disciples may well have been husband and wife (cf. [John 19:25](#); “Clopas” and “Cleopas” were likely the same person). They urged their road companion to stay with **them**, as a married couple would. If they hadn't, they'd have missed the joy of recognizing the risen Jesus. How do you invite Jesus into your daily life? Like these disciples, have you learned to recognize his presence amid everyday pressures—at meals, in conversation, in moments of study or reflection?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I want you, I need you, to be with me at home and everywhere I go. Like those early disciples, I invite you to join me and stay with me—at every meal and in every moment. Amen.

* William Barclay, *The Gospel of Luke* (Revised Edition). Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1975, p. 295.

Jesus Truly Alive, Not a Ghost

WEDNESDAY 4.15.26 Luke 24:36-49

After recognizing Jesus alive, the two disciples rushed to tell the news. But then Jesus stood among them! Luke, a first-century physician ([Colossians 4:14](#)), noted details showing Jesus was no ghost but alive in the flesh. One common belief was that angels didn't eat, “so this is further proof the risen Jesus was physical.” * Jesus explained the Scriptures and appointed his disciples to share his life-changing forgiveness. “You are witnesses,” he said, promising God would empower them for mission.

- Jesus summarized his message: “The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins must be preached in his name to all nations.” In what ways does believing Jesus rose from the dead change your heart and life? How does the resurrection make Jesus' claim to forgive sins credible?
- Pastor Bruce Larson noted that Luke knew “the Greek philosophy that.... believed that in death the mind and spirit were freed from their bondage to the body.... Luke... underscored the Hebrew theology... of the unity of body, mind, and soul.” ** He wrote that Jesus rose with a physical body and ate fish to prove it. That mattered because God values us whole—body, mind, and soul. The later Apostles' Creed said, “I believe in the resurrection of **the body**.” Do you believe in bodily resurrection? How does that hope help you value and appreciate your physical life now?

Prayer: King Jesus, I am grateful you conquered death and offer me the hope of resurrection! Help me rejoice in that hope and faithfully witness to others about the change you've brought to my heart and life. Amen.

* Richard P. Vinson, study note on Luke 24:41 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 164 NT.

** Bruce Larson, *The Preacher's Commentary Series, Volume 26: Luke*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, pp. 354-355.

Recognizing the Risen Lord on the Shore

THURSDAY 4.16.26 John 21:1-14

John, a master of evocative images, wrote early in his gospel that 'the world didn't recognize the light' (John 1:9-10). In chapter 21, he echoed that theme: "Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples didn't realize it was Jesus"—just like the two on the road to Emmaus ([Luke 24:30-31](#)). Jesus building a fire would have evoked painful memories for Peter of his faith "crashing" around a fire in Caiaphas' court ([John 18:15-18, 25-27](#)). John interwove these images to show how Jesus met his disciples exactly where they were—in ordinary work, in confusion, and even in their memories of failure.

- This story, like an earlier one in [Luke 5:1-10](#), showed Jesus directing experienced fishermen like Peter to a startlingly large catch. Imagine what Peter would have missed if he'd insisted on relying only on his own fishing expertise! When have your efforts been ineffective because you weren't open to Jesus' wisdom? What changed when you invited his guidance? How does "practicing the presence of Jesus" make your efforts more effective?
- When Jesus took the bread and fish and gave it to them, what memories this must have triggered—of feeding the 5,000 ([John 6:11](#)), of the Last Supper, of all the meals they'd shared. What remembered moments with Jesus—of insight, comfort, or courage—strengthen you for today's journey? How can recalling God's past faithfulness encourage you now?

Prayer: Loving Lord, long before you prepared this breakfast by the sea, the psalmist wrote, 'You set a table for me' (Psalm 23:5). As I eat today, remind me of the deeper ways you feed my soul. Help me recognize your presence in ordinary moments. Amen.

From Denial to Restoration: Jesus Forgave Peter

FRIDAY 4.17.26 John 21:15-19

Peter had denied knowing Jesus three times. His heart must have ached, eager to reconnect. Jesus, a master psychologist, didn't want that failure to haunt Peter forever. He let Peter affirm his love three times—deeper and more solid because Jesus forgave him after he failed. Then Jesus told Peter he would yet have the chance to live out his pledge from John 13:37: "I'll give up my life for you." With the cost of following clearly in view, Jesus repeated the same simple, sweeping call: "Follow me."

- Scholar N. T. Wright noted, "The three questions correspond to Peter's three denials. Three for completeness, yes, but three also for reminder. The smell of the charcoal fire lingers. Peter's night of agony—and Jesus' own night of agony—returns. But because of the latter, the former can be dealt with." * What failures might haunt your relationship with Jesus? Imagine yourself by that fire with Peter. Hear Jesus ask you by name, "_____, do you love me?" Answer three times, honestly and fully. Hear Jesus deal with whatever barriers separate you from him.
- There have been brave martyrs, but most Christ-followers will not be killed for their faith. Pastor John Ortberg wrote, "At the heart of Jesus' teaching lies this strange command: 'Take up your cross, die to yourself, and follow me' [Matthew 16:24]. The cross is a reminder that there is something in me that needs to die." ** How eager or hesitant are you to follow Jesus into a changed life? What specific habit, action, or thought is Jesus calling you to kill off or alter today?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, John Wesley prayed, “Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee.” I pray his words as my own. Help me truly mean them. Amen.

* N. T. Wright, *John for Everyone, part 2*. (Westminster John Knox Press, 2004, p. 164.)

** Ortberg, John, *Who Is This Man?: The Unpredictable Impact of the Inescapable Jesus* (p. 192). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

The Risen King Commissions His Witnesses

SATURDAY 4.18.26 Acts 1:1-14

Luke didn't stop with one book. He knew Jesus' story continued into what we call the book of Acts. (Luke's gospel ended with a short preview in [Luke 24:50-53](#).) As one scholar noted, Acts “is all about what Jesus is continuing to do and to teach.” Jesus is 'announced as King and Lord, not as a distant memory but as a living and powerful reality.... We call it 'The Acts of the Apostles,' but we should really think of it as 'The Acts of Jesus (II).’” The apostles asked, “Lord, are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel NOW?” They didn't see that he **already had**. “In the resurrection and ascension, Jesus was being enthroned as Israel's Messiah and therefore king of the whole world. The apostles were to go out as heralds of the one already appointed and enthroned, not someone who might become king in the future. One day that kingdom will come fully and finally. In the meantime, we have a job to do.” *

- Luke said that after his resurrection, Jesus spent forty days “speaking to them about God's kingdom.” That was the core of his preaching throughout his ministry ([Luke 4:43, 8:1](#)). One scholar said God's kingdom is “the experience of God's rule of peace and justice in Israel, the world, and the entire universe.” ** How does Jesus' teaching show that you are not just a member of a church with a finite history, but a citizen of God's eternal kingdom? How can understanding that change the way you treat others, spend money, entertain yourself, or deal with conflict?
- In verse 7, Jesus made clear that God—whose authority Jesus shared ([Mark 1:22, Luke 5:24](#))—sets the “times or seasons,” not us. He sent his followers to “the end of the earth” as witnesses to his kingship. The Greek term for “witness” appears thirteen times in Acts and means “one who testifies... speaking from personal experience.” *** Emil Brunner famously said, “The church exists by mission as fire exists by burning.” **** What does being a 'witness' look like in your everyday life—at work, in your neighborhood, with family and friends?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, empower me to be an effective witness to your love and salvation. Let my peace, purpose, and passion draw others to you. Give me courage to speak from my personal experience of your grace. Amen.

* Material from Wright, N.T., *Acts for Everyone, Part One: Chapters 1-12* (The New Testament for Everyone) (p. 2). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

** F. Scott Spencer, study note on Acts 1:3 in *The CEB Study Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2013, p. 218 NT.

*** Barclay M. Newman and Eugene A. Nida, *A Handbook on The Acts of the Apostles*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1972, p. 19.

**** Emil Brunner (1889-1966), *The Word and the World*, London: SCM Press, 1931, p. 11.

Prayer Requests – [cor.org/prayer](https://www.cor.org/prayer) *Prayers of peace and comfort for:*

To **John Oman** following the death of **Don Oman (father)**, who passed away on **4/2/2026**.

To **Beth Sutton** following the death of **Charlie Allen** (mother), who passed away on **3/30/2026**.

To **Vada Mae Eder** following the death of **Verne Peterson** (husband), who passed away on **4/7/2026**.

To **Mark McMillan** (son) and **Nancy McMillan** (wife) following the death of **John McMillan**, who passed away on **3/27/2026**.