

INTRO:

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- Thank you for having me
- My first time in E.Europe

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- This is my wife Heather with each of our girls - 6 yrs ago.

Hope just turned 36. Erin is 31.

Heather and I celebrated 43yrs of marriage one month ago.

42 years ago the Lord spoke to me that I was do a PhD in Early Church History...then teach in a seminary.

It took 14 years for me to finally go to school for my degree.

After getting my PhD it another 24 years for God open the door to teach in a seminary.

[I think I am a slow learner!]

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I am in my second year as a professor at Continental Theological Seminary...in Brussels.

I hope to teach there for 15 yrs.

The goal of our school has always been to raise up men and women who will plant churches in Europe, Africa and the Near East.

My primary expertise is the first 4 centuries of Church History and I also teach various NT classes.

So, let's get into the text today to see what the Lord would say to us through the scriptures.

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**Jesus in the Midst
of Doubt
Luke 24**

+ + + Let's Pray + + +

This is a continuation of the Easter story from last week.

If you read each of the four gospel accounts you will find that:

1. The women close to Jesus discovered the empty tomb

2. The accounts differ slightly, BUT in all the gospels the women tell the men that Jesus is NOT in the tomb

3. *Matthew* and *Luke* give some indication that the men struggled to believe the women

The Emmaus Road - Luke 24

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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.

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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?”

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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?”

[We learn from the early Christian writer Hegesippus that Cleopas is the uncle of Jesus (the brother of Joseph). Cleopas' wife, Mary (Jesus' aunt) was present at the cross with Mary, the mother of Jesus.]

The first thing to notice is these two men were discouraged.

While He was alive Jesus told them He would be killed...

But these men are distressed...

v17 says their faces were **downcast**..

[Gk: sad, gloomy]

Then as they tell the stranger their story in v21 they say,

...**we had hoped** that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

22 In addition, **some of our women** amazed us. [Clopus' wife was likely there!]

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.”

This is another piece of evidence that the disciples were having trouble believing the story.

AND this why, as an historian, the gospels have such credibility.

The gospels do not hide the struggle...it is obvious that the disciples doubted...

The scriptures do not make the disciples into Marvel comic book heroes! They are flawed men! Just like us.

This gives us hope.

God will not reject us because we sometimes doubt.

Peter denied Jesus three times!

The man called "The Rock" by Jesus struggled...

So these two men end their comments by saying that the disciples: **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.

So, Jesus did scold these men...
You are slow to believe!

It's evening...getting dark...and
These men on the way to Emmaus
ask the man [Jesus] to stay with
them.

They sit down to eat and the man
takes bread, tears it as he gives
thanks...

SUDDENLY...these men realize....
IT'S JESUS!
and He disappears!

These men have just walked 11km
to Emmaus...until it was dark.

NOW they jump up and
walk...MUCH faster back to
Jerusalem...to tell the disciples.

v34 "It is true! The Lord has risen."

So, please let me conclude this story
...and my message.

Two Christians are discouraged,
walking down a road together...
wishing their faith could be stronger.

AND Jesus shows up...and walks
with them...without being noticed.

THIS is the God we serve.

He walks WITH us during times of
struggle...and we don't see Him.

Sometimes He allows the struggle.

Sometimes He causes the struggle.

To push us...

To make our faith stronger.

BUT He always walks WITH us in the struggle.

In Psalm 77 the writer describes such a struggle:

v1 I cried out to God for help;

I cried out to God to hear me.

2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord; at night I stretched out my hands, but I would not be comforted.

v4 I was too troubled to speak.

v7 “Will the Lord reject me forever?

Will he never show his favor again?

Then the writer says,
"I will recount all His mighty deeds."
He then describes a horrible storm
with heavy rain and lightening bolts
flashing all around.

v18 the earth trembled and quaked.
v19 Your path led through the storm,
yet your footprints were not seen.

In struggle, it always FEELS like
Jesus is not there...

But He is...

He is walking with us...we just don't
recognize Him.

+ + + LET'S PRAY + + +