



The Nourishing Vocation Project

Engaging the Living Word

The Emmaus Road - [Luke 24:13-35](#)

What is this particular text?

- Story
 - Resurrection appearance story
 - Journey story
 - Meal story
- Prophetic fulfillment
- Teaching
- Theology
- Revelation

How does the text function within the scriptural story?

- Jesus is not recognized
 - Connection to Abraham and Sarah not recognizing God ([Genesis 18](#))
- Easter evening
- The first resurrection appearance in Luke
- Fulfillment of prophecies
- Both journey and meal are important
- Jesus is recognized in the breaking of the bread (similarities to previous “teaching and breaking bread stories”
 - [Luke 22:14-23](#)
 - [Luke 9:10-17](#)

How can this text function in the church today?

- This text has a liturgical connection
 - Word and Sacrament
 - Real presence – amid physical absence
- Connects with our unfulfilled hopes and expectations
- Invitation to reflect upon when we have failed to see Jesus right in front of us
- Invitation to reflection upon how we do – or do not – tell what we know about Jesus

What does the text do to you? How do you react to the text? What feelings does this text engender in you?

- Makes a connection with times in my own life when hopes have been dashed
- Renews my centering of sacramental theology
- Reminds me of my own questions – and misunderstandings of Jesus
- There is no “holding on” to Jesus: Jesus cannot be put into the box of either our expectations or our certitude
- Makes me wonder if I am really open to encountering Jesus along my own roads

What do you have to say to the text?

- Of course they were on their way home
- It is hard to see Jesus when we are not expecting to see Jesus
- Jesus “journeying with” is highly comforting
- Who is the companion, and why is the companion not named?

What do you see through this text from the story itself?

- “But we had hoped...” is a universal, human refrain
- Jesus shows up when we least expect
- Jesus journeys with
- Jesus makes space for the sharing of sorrows and disappointments
- The life of faith is not all about certainty
- There is plenty of room of questions and confusion

What do you see from within your church/community/world? (2022)

- How often has the church not “walked with” folks in their sorrow and disappointment?
- Millions of people make the journey away from hope everyday
 - Migrants
 - Refugees
 - Those leaving the institutional church
 - Everyday people in their everyday lives whose hopes – whatever they are – have not been fulfilled
 - Failed relationships
 - Dashed career aspirations
 - Jobs that come to a premature end (or are applied for and never received)
- Crises of our current time
 - The church doesn’t always show up amid suffering
 - Millions of people are “on the road”
 - The life of faith and life in the public square are always in tension and dialogue

What do you see within yourself?

- My personal journeys away from hope
- People who have walked with me as Christ
- Times when I have sought to walk with others as Christ
- Hunger for Word and Sacrament

What is the context – textual and historical?

- Resurrection evening
- Follows the women telling the 11 and the rest about the messengers at the tomb
- Follow Peter seeing that the tomb is empty
- Precedes Jesus’ appearance among the disciples and eating fish in their presence
- Highlights the corporeality of the resurrected Jesus

What questions does this text raise for you?

- Who were Celopas and his companion, and why is this the only time that we hear about them?



- Why is Cleopas' companion unnamed: was the companion a woman?
- What does it mean that Jesus disappears as soon as they recognize him?
- Why does Jesus' teaching begin with Moses and the prophets, instead of Abraham?
- What does it mean to be open to resurrection today?
- How difficult is it to be open to resurrection today?
- What gets in the way of being open to resurrection today?

What words/themes seem of particular import?

- But we had hoped...
- The same day
- Came near
- Went with them
- With
- Astounded us
- Necessary
- Stay with us
- Took ... blessed ... broke
- Eyes were opened
- Returned
- They told

What is the Gospel / transforming Good News within this text?

- Jesus shows up when life is hard
- Jesus walks with us amid the journey away from hope
- With = most important word in all of scripture
- Jesus holds space for our sorrow and confusion
- Jesus listens
- Jesus teaches/opens the scriptures
- Jesus is made known in the breaking of the bread
- Real presence amid physical absence
- Jesus neither mocks nor dismisses confusion
- Jesus gives good news to share

What is the as-over-againstness of this text?

- Grief is powerfully real
- The journey away from hope is real
- Life is filled with unfulfilled hopes and dreams
- Sometimes (often?) the life of faith does not make sense
- Confusion is a part of the journey
- Good news is hard to believe
- Sometimes (often?) we fail to recognize Jesus
- We sometimes (often?) misunderstand the scriptures

Who does this text say that Jesus is, or if not Jesus, then who does this text say that God is? What does this text say about God?

- One who walks/journeys with
- One who holds space
- One who listens



- One who is present
- One who is revealed in the breaking of the bread
- One who gives a new vision
- One who opens us to understand differently

What have others said about this text?

- [“The main problem expressed](#) by the two disciples is the loss of hope (v. 21). The imperfect of hope (*elpizomen*) implies that they "were hoping" or "kept hoping" in the past. The crucifixion of Jesus was a loss of hope. The resurrection of Jesus restores hope. He is no longer dead. However, note that just the appearance of the risen Jesus was not enough to restore faith and hope -- they don't even know who he is.” Brian P. Stoffregen
- [They are not part of the inner circle](#) of Jesus’ disciples — at least we have not heard them named before now. And yet they have been close enough to these astonishing events that they know it all — right down to the witness of the women at the tomb early that morning. Even so, they have decided not to stay behind closed doors with the others. Apparently they have seen enough and they have decided it’s time to go home.” Janet Hunt
- [“Their grief has blinded them](#) temporarily to Resurrection hope. Loss is all they are willing to embrace. Their spirits are completely at the mercy of what they perceive to be their failed hopes.” Alyce McKenzie

What will I teach or proclaim?

- Jesus walks with you on the journey away from hope
- Jesus’ presence is more powerful than Jesus’ absence
- Jesus does not dismiss your sorrow and confusion
- Jesus accompanies you in your grief
- Jesus is made known to you in the breaking of the bread
- Jesus gives you a message to tell
- Jesus calls you to new understandings
- Just when you think you have Jesus figured out, Jesus expands your vision yet again
- Jesus calls you to learn from him

