The Emmaus Encounter: Revelation on the Road
Speaker: Deacon Steven Sifers
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Scripture: Luke 24:13–35

Introduction Well, good evening everyone. It's good to see you all here. I want to welcome you to worship with Christ the King. My name is Stephen; I'm privileged to be the deacon here. It's a great joy for me to be here with you to sing God's praises, to share in the communion meal, and to open God's scriptures to see what he has to say for us this evening.

Now, this morning, I preached at Church of the Advent, a sister church of ours, and I kept saying, "Evening, good evening." And so I had to tell them if I say evening, it means morning. And if I say morning here, it means evening. So please stay with me.

We have a lot to cover this evening, so I'm just going to jump right in. We're in **Luke 24 starting at verse 13**. It's the story of the road to Emmaus, which Jesse read to us a few minutes ago. So it's a familiar passage for you, I hope. But if it's not a familiar passage, it still has this **gut-wrenching beginning** that I think we often find ourselves in.

The Condition of Disappointment The situation of the disciples is familiar to us. Perhaps you've taken a moment to reflect back on your life or on your current circumstances and you find yourself thinking, **"I had hoped."**. I had hoped for something more or something different. Perhaps it's "I had hoped to be married by now," or "I had hoped to have children," or "I had hoped that all of my children were walking with the Lord.". Or maybe it's "I had hoped that the family that I formed would stay together, but that didn't happen.". Perhaps it's a medical issue and you are thinking, "I had hoped that this last treatment would relieve all of my pain." Or maybe it's "I had hoped to be further along in my career now," or "I had hoped to have more money so that I could do the things that I want to do.". You reflect on your life and it's just not turning out the way you thought. Well, that's the condition of the two disciples that we found on the road to Emmaus.

The Emmaus Pattern We're going to discover here this evening an **Emmaus pattern**. We'll look at the story in three movements: **revelation in the word, recognition in the bread, and response in mission**—or another way to say that is burning hearts, opened eyes, and moving feet.

Before we move on, let me pray for us. Lord, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, my rock, my redeemer. Kindle our hearts this evening and awaken our hope that we may know you as you are revealed in scripture and then meet you in the breaking of bread. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Movement One: Revelation in the Word

Our story starts in verse 13 with two disciples—Cleopas and an unnamed friend—walking on the road to Emmaus on Easter evening. They had just suffered great trauma and were actively grieving what might have been. The entire frame of their life had been shattered in the last few days, and they could not think of anything else. And just then, **Jesus draws near**.

Isn't that just like Jesus? Luke says in verse 15, "And Jesus himself drew near and went with them.". That is his promise to us as well; he is with us always, to the end of the age. He is with us in our doubts, our confusion, and when life shatters our expectations.

But an odd thing happened in verse 16: **their eyes were kept from recognizing him**. This was a "divine passive," indicating that God was the actor who intentionally withheld the recognition. While it may seem a little harsh, it had a great theological and pastoral aim. By not being recognized, Jesus was able to **expound the scriptures** to them. He corrected their dashed expectations. They had hoped for a military victory and the restoration of the Davidic throne, but Jesus showed them from Moses and the prophets that the Messiah **had to suffer** before he entered into his glory.

We need to build our faith on scripture because it is the authoritative witness to Christ. The alternative is grounding your faith on subjective experience, personal feelings, or shifting circumstances—none of which are firm foundations. Jesus took the shattered hopes of these two disciples and reframed everything through the lens of scriptures. Glory only came through the cross.

Movement Two: Recognition in the Bread

In verse 28, Jesus acted like he wanted to travel further, but they prevailed on him to stay. Then we reach the climax: Jesus reenacts the last supper. Verse 30 says, "When at the table he took the bread and he broke it and gave it to them and their eyes were opened and they recognized him.".

Christ is known in the union of word and sacrament. As N.T. Wright says, scripture without the meal becomes detached intellectualism, and the meal without scripture risks becoming magic. Together they form the center of Christian living.

Interestingly, the moment they recognized him, he vanished from their sight. This was so the church would not depend on his continuing physical visible presence for fellowship. Recognition now comes through the normal and familiar actions of breaking bread, blessing it, and sharing it. Do you come to the table each week expecting to meet Jesus and have your eyes opened?

Movement Three: Response in Mission

The story doesn’t end at the table. In verse 33, they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. Their burning hearts and opened eyes immediately propelled them back out into the dark, dangerous night to tell their faith community what had happened.

This is the supernatural response to any real encounter with Jesus: we move from personal revelation to increased fellowship and then out into a hurting world to tell them about the risen Christ. At the end of our service, we don't just dismiss you; we **send you** back into your own "Jerusalems"—your homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods—to declare, "Alleluia! Christ is risen!".

Conclusion I wonder what it would take tonight for you to leave here and tell someone that you met the risen Lord in the hearing of the word and the taking of the bread. That is the pattern of Emmaus: **revelation in the word kindling your heart, recognition in the bread opening your eyes, and response in mission with moving feet**.

Will you pray with me now? *Lord Jesus, stay with us for evening is at hand and the day is passed. Be our companion in the way. Kindle our hearts that we may know you as revealed in scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. Amen*.