

# EASTER SUNDAY

2018

Text

Luke 24:13-35

Topic

When the two disciples on the road to Emmaus realize they've been accompanied by Jesus, they exclaim, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us?"

Title

*"My Heartburn will Go On"*

In the rebooted *Star Wars* universe, the non-trilogy films *Rogue One* and *Solo* have the further descriptor, *A Star Wars Story*.

On Easter Sunday our Bible text ought always to be *A Resurrection Story*. We can hardly overstate the importance of the physical, bodily resurrection from the dead of Jesus. One commentator stated it this way: "What does the resurrection mean to the redeemed? Everything. It means you're right with God. It means we have a new life principle. It means we have eternal life. It means we're secure in Him. It means we have power. It means we have hope. It means we are gonna be raised to glory someday."

The apostle John put it this way: "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (First John 3:2).

No matter how much we talk about the resurrection of Jesus, however, there remains a great deal of confusion about Easter.

Maybe you've heard about the three blonde women who died and went to Heaven. In the interest of political correctness (but more so my personal safety), let's call them three Italian men.

St. Peter told them that they could only enter Heaven if they answered one simple question, "What is Easter?"

The first Italian replied, "Oh, that's easy! It's the holiday in November when everyone gets together, eats turkey, and are thankful..."

"Wrong!," replied St. Peter, and proceeded to ask the second Italian the same question.

He replied, "Easter is the holiday in December when we put up a tree, exchange presents, and drink eggnog."

"Wrong!," replied St. Peter, and proceeded to ask the third Italian the same question.

He smiled confidently and said, "Easter is the Christian holiday, that coincides with the Jewish celebration of Passover. Jesus and His disciples celebrated the last supper. Then the Romans took Him to be crucified where He was scourged and made to wear a crown of thorns, and was hung on a cross with nails through His hands and feet. After saying, "It is finished!," Jesus dismissed His spirit. He was removed from the cross and buried in a nearby borrowed tomb which was sealed off by a large boulder."

St. Peter smiled broadly, and was just about to open the pearly gates, when the third Italian continued: "Every year the boulder is moved aside so that Jesus can come out... **And, if he sees His shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter.**"

In the twenty-fourth chapter of the Gospel of Luke we find *Emmaus: A Resurrection Story*. It is about two disciples of Jesus who were confused about the first Easter.

Luke 24:13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

Luke 24:14 And they talked together of all these things which had happened.

I just realized I didn't tell you how the three Italians died. They were taking a walk in the country when they came upon tracks in the ground. The first one said, "Those must be deer tracks!"

The second one said, "No, stupid, anyone can tell those are rabbit tracks!"

The third said, "No, you idiots, those are horse tracks!"

***They where still arguing ten minutes later when the train hit them.***

Luke 24:15 So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

We most often describe our relationship with God as a "walk." There are numerous references to walking with God in the New Testament. In the Book of Ephesians, for example, you are told to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called (4:1); you are told that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk (4:17); you are told that you should walk in love (5:2); you are told that you should walk as children of the light (5:8); and you are told that you should walk circumspectly (5:18).

Those, and the many other references, to walking with God are wonderful; but there is something behind them that we often overlook. The idea of walking with God should involve making *progress*, for sure; but it should mostly involve *passion*. Lovers take walks. They don't do it to get somewhere. They do it to be with someone. The progress that they make is not measured in *distance*, but in *devotion*. They spend time getting to know one another, deepening in their love. They usually arrive at the same location from which they started – but feeling very different about themselves, having made a romantic progress that puts everything in an entirely new perspective.

God loves to take walks with you. Right at the beginning of the Bible, in the third chapter of Genesis, God is described as being heard walking in the garden [of Eden] in the cool of the day, looking for Adam and Eve. It implies that walking along with them was a regular activity that God looked forward to.

Cleopas was one of the travelers; the other may have been his wife. We learn in the Gospel of John that her name was Mary (John 19:25). The thing that grabs you is that they did not recognize Jesus.

Luke 24:16 But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

Somehow supernaturally they were prevented from recognizing that it was the risen Lord walking and talking with them. Scholars suggest a multitude of reasons why their eyes were restrained. I'm suggesting that it was because Jesus has a flair for romance.

In the many film versions of the tale of Robin Hood, he wears disguises, and even the woman he loves, the maid Marion, cannot always recognize him until Robin chooses to reveal himself.

Luke 24:17 And He said to them, “What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?”

Luke 24:18 Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?”

Luke 24:19 And He said to them, “What things?” So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, Luke 24:20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him.

Luke 24:21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

Luke 24:22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

Luke 24:23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

Luke 24:24 And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.”

They had the Word of God, and witnesses, that Jesus had risen from the dead:

1. The Word of God is summarized in their reference to the “third day since these things have happened.” More than once the Lord had told His followers He would be condemned to death and crucified, but be raised the third day.

2. The witnesses of His resurrection thus far included angels, women, and at least two of the apostles – Peter and John.

We, too, have the Word of God and witnesses - in much greater abundance on both counts.

Why did they - and why do people still - fail to believe Jesus lives? Perhaps they were restrained in seeing Jesus because of their expectations of who He was and what they wanted Him to do:

- They expected a conquering Messiah; they got, so they thought, a crucified man.
- They expected a politician; they got, so they thought, a prophet.
- They expected the Lion of the Tribe of Judah; they got, so they thought, a meek lamb.

Your expectations of Jesus should be based on the following:

- He's the One who took your place as Substitute and Sacrifice on the cross at Calvary.
- He's the One who saved you from death and Hell; Who fills you with His Spirit; Who is building your home in Heaven; Who will return to take you there.
- He's the One who, in the mean time, is at work changing you day-by-day to become what you were created to be.

Luke 24:25 Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

Luke 24:26 Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?"

Jesus appealed to “the prophets.” I’d be remiss in my responsibilities if I did not mention that God, in the Bible, makes incredible predictions, and then brings them to pass. No other religious writing, or religion, can boast of such fulfilled prophecy.

If you are not a believer in Jesus, and think all this talk of His resurrection is some sort of fantasy, I ask you this: What can you say to the mathematical impossibility of Jesus fulfilling just eight Old Testament prophecies? The odds are expressed as one in 10 to the twenty-first power.

But Jesus didn’t fulfill eight prophecies. **He fulfilled at least sixty-one.**

(You may have heard, and I’ve probably said, there are more like three hundred prophecies that Jesus fulfilled. One mathematician puts it this way: “There are nearly 300 references to 61 specific prophecies of the Messiah that were fulfilled by Jesus Christ... The odds against one person fulfilling that many prophecies would be beyond all mathematical possibility. It could never happen, no matter how much time was allotted”).

Cleopas and Mary did not have what might be called a theology of suffering. It was inconceivable to them that the Savior would suffer and die - even though certain of their Scriptures said as much.

Are you hurting in some way today? I have a word for you:

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Have you noticed that when people are hurting that they seek out others who can relate to their experiences? They find an individual, or a group, to ease the suffering. Jesus is the ultimate Person to seek-out, and to be comforted by.

Luke 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

“Moses” is credited with writing the first five books of the Bible. Jesus gave them a systematic Bible study, starting with Genesis.

It’s interesting to note, in passing, that the very first Bible study the Lord gave after He rose from the dead was on prophecy. In fact, Jesus spoke a great deal on the subject of prophecy - both before and after He rose from the dead. One of His longest teachings is the Olivet Discourse, taking up three chapters in the Gospel of Matthew.

His study on the road to Emmaus was arguably the greatest Bible study ever delivered:

- Jesus undoubtedly told them that He was there, in Genesis, creating the universe.
- That He was the promised Seed of the woman in the Garden of Eden Who would crush the serpent’s head, but be bruised in the process.
- That when Abraham was instructed to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, on Mount Moriah it was a type of God the Father sacrificing His only begotten Son, Jesus, on the Cross on the exact same spot.
- That the Passover lambs that were slain in Egypt and for centuries afterward were typical of Himself as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world.



He may have described how each of the sacrifices in the Tabernacle represented Him; or how each piece of furniture in the Tabernacle pointed to Him.

Jesus probably reminded them that the words He spoke from the cross, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?,” were a quote from Psalm 22 – *which perfectly predicted His death by crucifixion some 400 years before it occurred.*

He undoubtedly mentioned Isaiah 53 and its predictions of the suffering Savior. We could go on-and-on.

I, too, wish we had the text of this study. But what I find fascinating is this: If you regularly attend a Bible-teaching church, **you do hear this study.**

And it’s as if Jesus Himself is talking to you, because it is God the Holy Spirit within you Who is teaching you.

Two disciples, walking along with Jesus – but they were restrained from seeing Him. Am I being restrained? Are you being restrained? It’s an important question to ask ourselves. Our expectations (or lack of them); our culture; our prejudices; our preconceptions. Sin. All of these and more can restrain us from seeing the Lord.

This is a romantic story. Lovers understand what happened next. Jesus would have gone on further, but the two constrained Him to stay.

Luke 24:28 Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther.

Luke 24:29 But they constrained Him, saying, “Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.” And He went in to stay with them.

In a moment we will read that their hearts were burning within them as Jesus talked on the road. Having not seen Him, they loved Him. Jesus kindled their love and thus they constrained Him to remain with them.

Jesus said He would never leave you or forsake you. He is portrayed as your Bridegroom, and you as His bride.

Eliminate this passionate element and your walk will become stale. He remains with you; but you are not realizing it. Eventually He will say something like, “Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.”

Luke 24:30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them.

Luke 24:31 Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

This, by the way, was *not* communion. They were simply sharing a meal.

There was something about the way Jesus handled the bread, blessing it and breaking it, that was unmistakable.

It's like that with lovers. Certain very common behaviors are done in ways that become endearing. Do you remember this line in a Beatles song: *Something in the way she moves attracts me like no other lover*. The song goes on to mention other common activities that become precious when you're in love.

The idea here is the same, only it's a far deeper romance because it is Jesus Who loves you, and it's with an everlasting love.

Jesus vanished from their sight. They would see Him again. But better than seeing Him: He would ascend into Heaven and send the Holy Spirit to live within them, and among them. He would be more present with them than ever before.

Luke 24:32 And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

Luke 24:33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem...

They didn't finish their meal. They didn't clean-up after themselves. It was difficult and extremely dangerous to travel so great a distance after dark. Love makes you do strange things.

Luke 24:33 So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together,

Luke 24:34 saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

Luke 24:35 And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

Before Cleopas and Mary could give their report, the other disciples blurted-out close encounters with the Lord of their own kind. All of them talked only about Jesus. It was a sure sign of their love.

You can only really understand the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus if you factor in an element of romance. The way Jesus hid His identity from them, and then waited until they compelled Him to stay with them, are romantic elements in the story. Overlook the romance, and all you've got in this story is disappointment that the Bible study Jesus gave was not recorded for you. Factor in the romance and you realize that the Bible study is absent for a reason.

**It's absent because you are to discover it for yourself on a daily basis as you and Jesus walk along together.**

All over the United States, and all over the world, pastors are finishing their Resurrection Story sermons by giving an altar call. An altar call is when we call upon sinners who don't know Jesus as their Savior to acknowledge their sin, repent of it, and receive the Holy Spirit.

We sometimes ask them to raise their hands... Or to come forward... And then lead we them in a sinners prayer.

I want to do something a little different. Altar calls are great, and biblical, but instead of an altar call, I'd like to do a **roll call**.

It's simple: If you know that you are a Christian, who has received Jesus Christ as Savior, and have assurance that if the Lord came right now, or if you died, you'd be in Heaven... Raise your hand & keep it up for a moment.

If you did not raise your hand... What are you waiting for? We've presented a living Savior Who fulfilled Bible prophecy to a degree that is mathematically impossible. It is what we call evidence that demands a verdict.

The Bible warns you, “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). There’s no question that you can answer at the Pearly Gates by which St. Peter will allow you entrance. Your destiny, and your afterlife destination, are determined in this life.

In fact your destiny, and your afterlife destination, can be determined right now:

- Jesus said that if He was lifted-up, on the cross, He would draw all men to Himself.
- We’re told He is therefore the Savior of all men - especially those who believe.
- God the Holy Spirit is here to free your will so that you can believe in Him and have everlasting life.

It’s simple, really. On the cross Jesus took upon Himself your sin, and He offers you His righteousness. It is a gift that cannot be achieved by your good works, but it is received by faith.

To help you understand, the Bible depicts salvation as a change of clothing:

- If you are not a believer, Isaiah 64:6 says, “But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...”
- Then Isaiah says, “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels” (61:10).

Put-off the rags and receive the robe.

As we close with worship - we invite you to come forward to be prayed for, and either *rededicate* yourself to Jesus, or *receive* the Lord:

- Maybe you're a believer, but your love has grown cold; come forward.
- Maybe you're not a believer; come forward, to receive the risen Lord.