



Week Eight: Encountering Jesus AS OUR HOPE

Luke 24: 13-36

Opening Question: Today we will find Jesus surprising two hopeless disciples on the road to Emmaus. Have you even been part of a really great surprise? Or has someone ever surprised you in a special or memorable way?

CONTEXT

A quick look back: Last week we saw Jesus live out his mission “to seek and save the lost” through his encounter with Zacchaeus. What do you remember from that encounter? What did it teach you about Jesus’ heart for those who are lost?

Today’s Passage: Our story today picks up right after the events of Jesus crucifixion and death. Even though Jesus had told his followers that he would suffer and die, they are having an impossible time making sense of the death and despair they have witnessed. And while some have already testified that Jesus has risen, without their own proof, most of the followers of Jesus are unsure what to think. Today we get to meet two of these desperately sad disciples as they slowly make their way back home, sure that all hope has been lost. It is in this hopeless state that a “stranger” finds them on the road and asks them to open up their heartache to him. In the conversation and events that follows, their hopelessness turns to joy as Jesus reveals himself as their LIVING, BREATHING HOPE. Today we encounter Jesus not just as their hope, but as our hope, too.

CONTENT

Read Luke 24: 13-36 out loud and then pick ONE of the following ways (Option A, B, or C) to help your group engage with this passage.

Option A. Notice/Wonder: Ask everyone to read the passage again quietly on their own. As they read, ask them to make a list like the one below. Remember that what people notice or wonder can just be small, simple things.

What do I NOTICE about this text?

What do I WONDER about?

Once everyone has had the chance to make their list, come together as a group to share and discuss your observations, writing them in a place where everyone can see the list as it develops.

Option B. Creative Engagement: Give everyone paper and drawing supplies. Have everyone read the passage again on their own, then invite them to spend some time illustrating the passage (or a part of the passage) in whatever way they want- concrete, abstract, colors, images, lists, words. When everyone has completed their art, come together to share and discuss what you drew and why.

Option C. Guided Bible Study Questions:

1. Describe the mood and hearts of the two disciples in vs 13-24.
2. Instead of saying “Ta-da!! It’s me!!” when the disciples begin to reveal the source of their sadness, Jesus asks a very important question in vs 19. What is it? What does this question allow these two followers to do? Why might this be important?
3. How does Jesus choose to explain who he is to these followers? How far back does he go? How thorough is his explanation (look for a repeated word in vs 27)?
4. Jesus was invited as a guest to the house. Who should have been hosting the table? What essential event is Jesus replicating here (see Luke 22: 13-20 if needed)? Why do you think THIS is the moment the disciples recognize him?

5. Read Genesis 3: 6-7- the account of how sin entered the world. Notice the specific wording in this account related to Adam and Eve that is repeated in Luke 24: 31. What do you think Luke is doing here? If Genesis describes how sin and death entered creation, what is this new “meal” signifying?
6. Describe the mood and hearts of the two disciples in vs 28-35.
7. Jesus’ followers have been experiencing grief. Confusion. Shame. Despair. What word does Jesus now speak over them in vs 36?

APPLICATION

How does all of this connect to our lives? Here are some questions to help guide your discussion. Choose one or several.

- When Jesus asks the disciples, “What things?” he is in essence inviting them into a prayer of lament. Giving them the opportunity to name out loud all the broken and hard and complicated things they are experiencing. Talk about how lament and hope might be related. What do you learn about Jesus through this invitation? How comfortable are you engaging in acts of lament? How does this story broaden your perspective on lament?
- Jesus uses Scripture to address the heartache and lament of the two disciples. Are there any passages in Scripture that have provided healing or comfort to you in hard moments in your life? Or do you have any passages that you just particularly love that you come back to over and over again?
- This story illustrates a pattern in Scripture. Jesus reveals himself to the hopeless and reignites their hope and joy. And then those disciples go to another group of hopeless people and reignite their joy with the story of Christ. Have you ever had the chance to share the gospel or your own experiences of encounters with Jesus with someone who really needed to receive that hope? Or has someone done that for you? Share with the group.
- ***FOR EVERYONE:*** In the past 8 weeks, we have had the chance to witness Jesus encountering us through the witness of others, as well as in our waiting, our doubts, our gratitude, our need, our pride, our “lostness”, and today- AS OUR HOPE. As you finish this study, what will you carry with you? What story or stories are sticking with you? What have you learned about the heart of Jesus as he encounters us in every moment and every season of our lives?

PRAYER

Close your time together in prayer using one of the ideas below

- Use words/images/themes from the passage to guide your prayer.
- Raise up your “wonderings” from the notice/wonder section to God in prayer
- Take prayer requests and pray over each other as a group or in small groups
- Use this written prayer:

God of encounter and presence-

We thank you for being a God of hope. For being a God who fulfills promises. For being a God who walks with us on the road of life and invites us to open our suffering as a portal for relationship with you. Like the two travelers on that road to Emmaus, there are things in our lives that are hard and complicated and grief-filled. But like those two, we have the promise that none of those things are carried alone. And that your resurrection assures us that none of the hard and complicated and grief-filled stories will ever get the last word. Because your life gives us life. Your resurrection gives us resurrection. Your hope gives us hope. You promise us that you “will never leave us and never forsake us.” That our life with you is a never-ending encounter with a Father who loves us, a Son who saved us, and a Spirit that lives in us. For that promise, for that reality, for that HOPE, we give you our deepest thanks.

We pray this in the name of Christ, our living HOPE. Amen.