23-29 April 2023 Joining the dots

Read the passage from Luke 24: 13-35 It is written below.

### On the Road to Emmaus

**13**Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+24%3A13-35&version=NIV#fen-NIV-26005a)] from Jerusalem. **14**They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. **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?”

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?”

**19**“What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. **20**The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; **21**but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. **22**In addition, some of our women amazed us. 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.”

**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.

**28**As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. **29**But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

**30**When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.**31**Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. **32**They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

**33**They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together **34**and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” **35**Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

**Bible notes**

The two travelling companions (husband and wife, perhaps – they shared a house) are joined by a stranger. They assume he’s a Passover pilgrim like them, and his questions draw out their story. What he hears is saturated with sorrow, dashed hopes and confusion. They’d hardly had time to get used to the execution of their beloved prophet before some women disciples said they’d found his tomb disturbed, and then were told by angels that he’d been raised from the dead. How were the companions to make sense of these contradictory stories of death and resurrection, to say nothing of their own jumbled thoughts and feelings?

When the stranger speaks, his words are sparing yet sharply focused. He uncovers a pattern in their Scriptures that reveals the divine way of suffering and glory to match the experience of Israel’s messiah. Might this reframe the travellers’ experiences? If verse 25 seems too harsh for grieving disciples, remember that Luke sees it addressed to his readers too, who must continue to make sense of the shameful crucifixion of Jesus in their world. But how?

The stranger’s words make an impression, but their impact is only felt at the meal in the couple’s home. Unusually, it is the guest who says grace before breaking and sharing the bread. But this is enough for the two to recognise him before he disappears from sight (v.31). His initiatives – asking questions that allow them to tell their story, opening up the deeper meaning of Scripture, using familiar words and actions at the meal – are like joining the dots of a picture that gradually reveals the new reality of resurrection. Luke’s readers, then and now, discover that same reality by making those same connections.

**Reflection**

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

The Emmaus Road story is like a dot-to-dot puzzle where joining the dots reveals the picture. The disciples draw on their past and recent experiences. They draw on their knowledge of Scripture. They add in their expectations of Jesus based on that experience and knowledge. They draw on the interpretation of Scripture offered by the stranger. They draw on their culture to offer hospitality – and that decision proves to be key! But the final piece eludes them until Jesus takes and breaks bread. Then the picture is complete. They see the risen Christ. Do we see a complete picture or are there pieces still covered to us?

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ] |  |

**Questions**

* What do you think is the story behind this image?
* How does the Emmaus Road story reveal more about Easter?
* For the Emmaus Road disciples it was Scripture and breaking

bread; what helps you join the dots?

##

## Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

### A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

Lord, as we go out and about this week,
may we recognise Jesus in everyone we meet.
May our whole lives be a beacon of praise and thanksgiving,
pointing to the one we love.
May we take every chance we get,
to talk about what you mean to us and show our love.
As we share with each other we get to know each other better,
and we grow stronger, and you, O God,
are revealed in a multitude of ways.
Thank you, Lord.
**Amen.**

## **A prayer to end the Bible study**

Lord, as we go from here, walk with us.
Inspire us to join the dots of our faith
to see more clearly the wonder of the Easter story.
Motivate us to share that story with others,
and encourage us to live and work with you and in you.
**Amen.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  |  |

**.**