

The Stranger on the Highway

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[0 : 00] As I said at the beginning, we're going to read Luke chapter 24, verses 13 to 32. If you've got a church Bible, it's on page 885. That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem.

And they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And he said to them, What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?

And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?

And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people.

And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened.

[1 : 15] Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

Some 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. And he said to them, O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going further, but they urged him strongly, saying, Stay with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent. So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight.

[2 : 24] They said to each other, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem.

And they found the eleven, and those who were with them gathered together, saying, The Lord has risen indeed and has appeared to Simon. Then they told what had happened on the road and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Amen. We're starting a month-long series today on the road to Emmaus. And we've got some time for some depth because we'll read the same passage four weeks in a row that we just read.

And we'll look at biblical interpretation and the Lord's Supper and how Jesus sets the mission of the church in this story. But that's all in the weeks to come. Today, we'll just look at the story itself and the main movements of the story and see what Luke wants us to see from this story.

So let's think about first, the road. Secondly, the second traveler. Third, the stranger. And finally, eyes to see.

[3 : 31] So first, the road. Now, in verse 13, where we started the passage today, Luke writes, That very day two of them were going. So what is—the first question he wants the reader to ask is, What is the day?

What day is this? And if you just cast your eyes just to the story above, it's the day of Jesus' resurrection. So this is Sunday morning even, maybe. And you can see that back in verse 12, if you have a Bible, that Peter runs to the tomb on Sunday morning, and he looks and he sees the linen cloths wrapped up, and the tomb was empty.

And so this is resurrection Sunday morning. And what's remarkable is that as a reader, if you're reading this for the first time, you want to say, Where is Jesus on resurrection Sunday?

Because when Peter goes to the tomb, the tomb is just empty. He doesn't find Jesus there. Now, Luke gives us three resurrection appearances.

We know from 1 Corinthians 15 that there were so many resurrection appearances that Jesus appeared to James, his biological brother, for example, and to more than 500 people. But Luke only chooses three to tell us.

[4 : 42] And so he's very selective as a historian, and he's a storyteller, and he wants to pull us in and to get us to ask why. And just even the way Peter comes to the tomb, Luke writes, he marveled at what happened.

And so he's struck and saying, you know, what happened? And then you as the reader says, well, what did happen? What happened? And then verse 13 says, and that very day. That's just the Greek word behold.

Behold. So the next verse just says, behold. And so you say, what are we to behold? And I think it's something like this. Imagine that you, you were in charge of running the press release.

You were the media chair of the announcement of the resurrection. Okay. And you, you know, you're in charge. It's a big job. And if you were to say, where am I going to make sure Jesus is publicly seen for the first moment of his resurrected body?

I, if I'm the press secretary, I'm going to put it in the Roman praetorium where he was convicted. I'm going to have him kicking the doors down of the Roman praetorium and going to Pilate and Caiaphas and saying, you see me?

[5 : 48] I'm, I rose from the dead. Or I'm going to have him going straight to, to Rome or even to the Jerusalem temple and going right through the door, shining and white, 25 feet tall.

And what's so remarkable is that this is resurrection Sunday and Jesus is on a completely no named ordinary dirt road with two people that are effectively nobodies in the story going to Emmaus, which is nowhere.

We don't even know what Emmaus is. It's been lost to history. And so what's extraordinary here is how ordinary the first resurrection appearance is. Now, look, if this was a legend, you just wouldn't use this as the first story.

Instead, you would have Jesus being five meters tall going straight through the doors of the temple announcing that he's risen from the dead and there would be the biggest crowd and everybody would see it. We know this.

I think this is the way we think as modern people, but this is also what people in the first century would do too, because if it was just a legend, we have one in the second century.

[6 : 56] There was a set of apocryphal texts called Gospels written. One of them is the Gospel of Peter. And in the Gospel of Peter, it's a second century text. The story of the resurrection of Jesus includes this moment where Jesus, alongside two angels, walks out of the tomb.

And there's two angels and their heads are sticking into the clouds in the Gospel of Peter. And it says Jesus had hung above the cloud line. You couldn't even see the top of his body.

So when he steps out of the tomb, he's a giant and he's in heaven. Now that's exactly what I would expect if it were a legend. But what you would expect, what you would never write is that he shows up to completely ordinary people on a very ordinary road going to effectively nowhere.

And that's the extraordinary ordinariness of this moment. Now, in this passage, several times Luke uses the phrase on the road. So it's down in verse 32 and 35.

And it says that Jesus had drawn near on the road and the disciples say, we met him on the road. And in the book of Acts that Luke also wrote, Luke's the author of Luke and Acts, that same word, exact Greek word, is used six times to describe the Christian movement.

[8 : 13] The way. So in this passage, he shows up on the road as the first resurrection appearance, also called the way. And in the gospel, it's not the gospel, pardon me, the book of Acts, the whole Christian movement is called the way.

And why is this happening? Why is Luke's trying to connect all that? And what is he saying? He's saying that this moment, this ordinary moment where Jesus shows up right after he's risen from the dead on the Emmaus road is the paradigm of the normal Christian life.

It's the paradigm of discipleship. It's that Jesus Christ does indeed just show up alongside ordinary human beings on the road, the way, and invite them to walk the way with him, to walk the path of discipleship with him.

It's incredibly ordinary. And we have this language all throughout the Bible. You have the Old Testament, Isaiah, the way of the Lord. And if you come to the New Testament, you think of that very famous moment where Jesus Christ says, I am the way.

And all of these are just pointing to this normal path that we all are walking down a road, a way, a life. And Jesus comes so near. He might, the disciples will come to this in just a moment.

[9 : 24] They're incredibly disappointed when he meets them. They're sad. And Jesus Christ, you might be disappointed or sad today, but Jesus Christ, we're being told here, may only be a foot away from you, the light shining, and in the midst of disappointment, you can't see it.

You can't see how close he actually is. And that means that this passage is paradigmatic for the whole of the Christian life. Now what? Why does Luke tell us this story?

First resurrection appearance. Number one, because it happened. Let me just give you one more note on that. And that's that when they're talking to him on this road in verse 18, they say, are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know what's happened?

And of course, he's the only one who does know truly, deeply, right? You're supposed to laugh at it. It's supposed to be funny. And you know what that indicates? That indicates everybody in Jerusalem knew about the crucifixion.

Everybody in Jerusalem knew that his body was not in the tomb anymore. They're saying, are you the only one? Everybody knows. No matter what they believe, they all knew. And then at the end of Luke's second volume, the book of Acts, in Acts chapter 26, Paul is defending Christianity before Festus and Agrippa, King Agrippa.

[10 : 39] Agrippa was a Jewish king, Festus a Gentile pagan ruler. And he tells them the story and Festus turns to Paul and says, I think, Paul, this whole stuff about Jesus dying and rising from the dead has made you go insane.

You've studied too much. You've read too many books. And Paul turns and what does he say? He says to Festus, I am not mad, noble Festus. What I'm saying is both true and reasonable.

And then he turns to Agrippa, the Jewish king. Because he's a Jewish king, he knows more about what had happened. And he said, the king is familiar with all these things. I'm sure none of these has escaped his notice for these things were not done in a corner.

They weren't hidden. Now, when the disciples are on the road with Jesus, they say, are you the only person who doesn't know all that's taken place? Because everybody did. And then he goes 25 years later to a king on the other side of the world and says, I know that you heard because everybody did.

These things were not done in a corner. See, why does he tell us this first resurrection appearance to two no-name people? Because it happened. That's why, because it wasn't done in a corner. Everybody knew about it.

[11 : 53] This is exactly what happened. It's not a legend. The second reason, as we said, is because it's a paradigm for us. What he does for them in this moment, he does for us.

In the Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan's great story, the second most published and sold book in world history beside the Bible, the pilgrim who becomes a Christian, he's, John tells this story, he's walking toward the celestial city, the eternal city, and the road that he's walking down has walls on both sides.

And Bunyan calls them the walls of salvation. So on either side of this narrow way towards the eternal city is these walls of salvation. They're really just walls of grace.

The grace is keeping the pilgrim on the way. And the very first stop, if you know the book, he comes to is the cross and the empty tomb. And this is what Pilgrim says when he arrives at the cross and the empty tomb.

He says, must here be the beginning of all my bliss. Must here the burden fall from my back. And so at the very beginning of the road, when Jesus Christ encounters you, you come to the cross and the empty tomb first.

[13 : 11] And you say, must not the burden fall from my back as I walk this road? You see what that, you see why this resurrection appearance? It's because Jesus Christ, he is the road, he is the way, he is the journeyman who has already gone before you.

In other words, he paved the road, it's secured. Easter has already happened. So he's not coming to them and saying, if you get on this road and you walk the narrow path and you obey me perfectly, then I might get you to the celestial city.

No, he's saying the road has already been paved because Easter, the victory has already happened. You see, this is, this is the, Luke includes this because this is just the paradigm of the normal Christian life.

Now secondly, the second traveler. Now we don't know where Emmaus is, it's been lost to us, people guess, but nobody knows. And we only know of one of the two travelers in the story, a man named Cleopas, verse 18.

That's a Greek name and it's a famous name, it's the masculine form of Cleopatra, that famous name, Queen Cleopatra. He may be, he may be Clopas, the wife of one of the Marys that was at the cross, probably part of the extended family of Jesus, but we don't know who he was.

[14 : 31] But what's really striking in this story is that we're told about a second traveler, a second journeyman, a person, and there's no indication of who they are at all. So we don't really know Cleopas, but we surely do not know who the second traveler is.

Now why, by the way, in Mark 16, the only other instance of the road to Emmaus story, both the travelers are unnamed. Now why the silence?

Why don't we, most everybody else at the end of the crucifixion stories, the resurrection stories, get named, but not the second traveler? Why the silence? And in the same way that this is an incredibly ordinary, extraordinarily ordinary moment, a pattern for just the average Christian life, I think what Luke is doing is trying to ask you as the reader to step in and be the second traveler.

The second traveler isn't named because Luke's not only a historian, he's not only a theologian, but he's also a storyteller. And this is both historically true and also an invitation. And it's an invitation for you to say, I am the second traveler.

The unnamed one is me. You can put your name in that second position. And this point has been recognized, by the way, by lots of the masters of art throughout the centuries.

[15 : 48] There are, I discovered just the past couple weeks, there are so many Road to Emmaus paintings in world history, especially in the Renaissance and in the medieval era and post-Reformation as well.

But there's one famous one by a Spanish artist named Diego Velasquez. And he painted this, not this scene exactly, actually painted verse 30.

We'll come to it in a minute when they arrive at dinner in Emmaus and they sit down, verse 30. And Diego painted it. So he titled it The Road to Emmaus or Dinner in Emmaus, something like that. But for centuries, we had the painting. It's in Dublin. And what you see is this young servant girl, a maidservant in this household. And she's in the kitchen and she's holding a pitcher of water or something and she has her hand down and she's stopped.

She's stopped and arrested her attention and her head's turned just like this. So it said The Road to Emmaus or the Emmaus meal, but it was confusing because it's just a young girl in a kitchen like this.

[16 : 54] But then in 1933, they cleaned the painting. It had grime on it. And in the upper corner, in the background, is just a little image of Jesus and the two travelers in the dining room in the little corner at the top.

And what's happening there is, of course, it's the moment where it says their eyes were opened, their hearts burned within them. And her heart, you see, Diego wants you to say, that's me.

I'm the servant girl. Her head's turned. Her attention's been arrested. Her heart is burning within her as she listens in on the explanation that he's giving to them at the end of the road to Emmaus.

And you see that the master artist saw the same point, that you are meant to put yourself in. So let me invite you to do that. The Lord Jesus, the resurrected Lord, is closer to you than you think.

He's walking more near to you than you think, than we often think he is. That's the invitation. Now let's see how, thirdly, the stranger. Now, in verse 14, they are talking, the two travelers, with each other, about all that's taken place.

[18:02] And then it says, verse 15, they were talking and discussing together. Now that sounds very repetitive, but the second word, discussing, is a word for arguing.

So it says something more like, they were talking and getting in a dispute with one another about all that had taken place. So there's some form of argument going on between the two travelers here. And then all of a sudden, verse 15, the stranger draws near.

We know it's Jesus. Jesus, they do not know it's Jesus. Where does he come from? From whence, the King James might say. From whence, where does he come from? And we don't know. He just comes from, from the side of the road and starts walking with them.

I like to imagine, maybe that, as soon as Jesus walks out of the tomb on the third day, and everybody's wondering, where is he? He, he made a beeline straight for the road to Emmaus, through the city.

Nobody noticed him. He comes out on this old dirt road. There's nobody around, and he just shows up. He catches up to them. And so something like that's taking place here. Now here's what they say to him.

[19:05] They say, down in verse 21, we had hoped, we're sad. We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. So that imperfect language, we had hoped he was the one.

And so when Jesus encounters them, this stranger, their posture is, we wished he was the redeemer. We longed, but he's not. That's their position.

We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. And so Luke, there between their sadness and some humor, as we already pointed out, verse 17, 18, and 19, they say to them, him, what's this, he says to them, I should say, what is this conversation you're holding with each other as you walk?

They stood still, they're sad. And then Cleopas says, are you the only one in all of Jerusalem, the only visitor who doesn't know what's happened? And then I think this is where the humor really lands.

Verse 19, Jesus says, what things? What happened? As if he doesn't know. And so he's playing with them and a bit of humor. And so in the midst, Luke writes this story of complex emotion where it's both funny and it's great, and they're in despair at the very same time.

[20:15] They're incredibly sad. Now why? Why? And here's what we're told. The language in this passage is they could not see him. Verse 16. So they're despairing because they can't see him.

They were kept, it's passive, they were kept from seeing him. Now anytime in the gospels that physical sight is talked about, it's never just physical sight, it's also about the heart, about spiritual sight, about faith.

And so they can't see with their physical eyes and that's a testimony that they cannot see with their spiritual eyes. They don't have faith. And Jesus points that out in verse 25. He says, Oh foolish one, slow of heart to believe.

So the physical block they have, the blindness physically, is a representation of the blindness they have in their hearts. Slow of heart to believe. And so they've got disappointment, they've got misunderstanding, and it's all because they can't see him.

Why? The text gives you three reasons that they can't see him. Number one, they believed that there was no such thing as the resurrection of the dead. They're walking on this road and they say, we had hoped, but he died.

[21:26] He wasn't. He wasn't what we thought. You see, they're in utter despair because they believe that there's no such thing as life after death. They believe that there's no such thing as any kind of resurrection from the dead.

And if you come here today, you live in this world, and there will undoubtedly be some in a room this size that come today where you believe that you're exploring maybe, but you believe that this life is all there is, and in so many years you're going to die, and your body's going to be put in the grave, and you're going to rot, and you're going to feed the grass, and that's it.

Then by definition, you don't have hope. And see, they are walking down this road, and it says that they had hoped, but they do no longer because they thought that death was the end of the road, that there is no such thing as the resurrection from the dead.

And we've, of course, we've got the same situation in our modern moment, but it's existed for all the centuries. The idea that we came about merely by chance, that there is no eternity, that there is nothing to expect in the afterlife, that you simply die, and you rot, and you happened by chance.

There is no lawgiver. There is no moral order given from above our mere opinions. There is no meaning maker from above our mere opinions. And if you believe that today, you have to say at least that beyond my own view of myself, I don't have any meaning, and there is no moral order, and I can't point to anything beyond what I think is right or wrong according to my opinion.

[22 : 56] And that simply means that you're without hope in the world. And boy, that, I want to suggest to you that that takes such a leap of faith actually to say, I don't think any of us really believes that, that your life doesn't have any meaning, that you don't have any purpose, that you actually just come by chance, that your vision of your own personal value is nothing but your own opinion.

I don't think anybody actually thinks that. We don't live that way. And the good news here in this passage is while these disciples on the road to Emmaus are there in this moment, boy, it's a leap of faith they don't have to make because it's simply not true.

The Christ who did rise from the dead and is promising eternal life is standing right next to them. Now, let's see a bit more about it. Secondly, what's blocking their eyes from seeing? They wanted, the second thing is they wanted the wrong type of rescue.

So, you see, right after that, back in verse 21 again, we're told, they had hoped that he would redeem Israel. So, they had hoped he would redeem Israel.

So, the word redemption there is a reference to being rescued, redeemed. It shows up in the Old Testament and all over the New. And the idea of being redeemed is an idea of being rescued from a prison or pulled from slavery.

[24 : 12] But what do they say? What does it say? We had hoped he would redeem Israel. And that means that the reason they're in such despair and they're without hope in this passage is because they expected political deliverance.

Jesus Christ came to deliver them from their sins, but instead they wanted deliverance from their circumstances. And so, they're in such despair because they think the one we thought was going to finally deliver us from Rome died.

He's simply gone. So, they were, these disciples were willing to read Isaiah in a place like Isaiah chapter 11 where it says, the Messiah will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

They were willing to read that and say, the Messiah will come and destroy the wicked and apply that to Rome. But they would not, they were not able yet to hear Isaiah 53 which says that he, the Messiah, would be bruised for our transgressions.

You see, the thing, they wanted salvation from their circumstances. They did not want salvation from their sin. They did not want, you know, it's so difficult to walk, the way of salvation is so easy because it's all grace, the walls of grace on the road of the pilgrimage.

[25 : 31] Yet, at the same time, it's so difficult because what the gospel requires of you is to say that my greatest problem is my pride, not my circumstances. And we want to be saved from our circumstances.

We want Jesus to win the cultural war. But we don't want to come to him and first say my problem is me, my problem is my sin. And so they looked for redemption from Rome.

They weren't yet looking for a redemption from themselves. And that means that they had yet to have a vision for the power, the truth, the proclamation of the body and blood of Christ broken.

They didn't know what the cross was about. They didn't see it. They thought he was going to redeem them from Rome, but they couldn't understand why he died. They could never imagine a crucified Messiah.

That was the one thing that they had no category for. And so they thought that his mission had utterly failed. We want, I think in the same way, remember this is us, we're the second traveler.

[26 : 32] This is a paradigm for the normal Christian life. We want Jesus Christ to be useful most of the time more than we want him to be our redeemer from our pride, more than we want him to break us from the inside out and remake us.

Now the third reason that they couldn't see is because of, very simply, is this divine passive. What does it say back in verse 16? Their eyes, quote, were kept from recognizing him.

Now this is a mysterious reality. It appears all across the Bible that the text multiple times clearly points us to say something like this. It's not just that they were blinded by their sin, their inability to see, but that something is holding their eyes shut.

And that someone who's doing that is Jesus. It's God. It's what the theologians call the divine passive. They are being kept from seeing by the Lord. Why is that? There's so much mystery in that. Let me try to arrive at something of an answer in the final point. So fourth and finally, eyes to see, which is really the heartbeat of the whole story.

[27 : 44] So in verse 16, lastly, their eyes are kept shut. And then if you look down at verse 31, the great moment, their eyes were opened. So they've landed at Emmaus and it says their eyes were opened.

And so here's the bookends of the passage that help us understand the story of the disciples on the way. Their eyes were closed, they couldn't see. And then at the end, when they sat at the table with him, their eyes were opened. But if you notice, what is it that really opened their eyes?

And the text tells us in verse 31, it's when the scriptures were opened up. So in verse 31, their eyes were opened and they recognized him.

And that's following a whole sequence of him opening the scriptures so their eyes were opened. And the two verbs are connected. He opened the Bible so their eyes were opened. Now there's a deep connection in Luke's gospel and the book of Acts between when the Old Testament, and that's all they had in this moment is the Old Testament.

The Old Testament scriptures are opened and explained and people's eyes are opened. And this happens in the book of Acts with Lydia. They explain the Bible to her and it says her heart was opened.

[28 : 53] And so the eyes and the heart are the same thing really. The physical sight and spiritual sight go together. And so what does he say? What does he say about their blindness? Verse 25, you are so slow to believe what the prophets had spoken.

So what does he attribute to their weak faith? He says it's because you refuse to read the prophets rightly and see what the prophets had spoken. So he says it's an issue of interpretation. It's an issue of Bible reading ultimately is how he explains it.

Now Jesus could have appeared as a 25 foot tall man, a five meter tall man or more. He could have kicked the door down of the Roman praetorium and shine with light to Caiaphas and Pilate and the emperor and everybody else.

What he chooses to do is to open the Bible and have a Bible study and change their lives through that means. It is striking that on Resurrection Sunday, the medium he uses to change lives is explaining the Bible.

and remember, this is you. It's extraordinarily ordinary and in this passage we've got just, as I finish, two extraordinarily ordinary ways that God transforms lives, that Jesus encounters you.

[30 : 13] And what does he say? Here it is. The first is that he gives us sight by the word of the scriptures and in verse 26, he says, was it not necessary that these things take place?

Was it not necessary that the Christ would suffer? What does he mean? He's pointing back to the Old Testament and then it says, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them and all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Now, this is next week's topic, biblical interpretation in the light of Luke 24. So, I won't get into it too much, but today, what does he say? He says, the whole Old Testament is about me.

And that's what you need to see to have your eyes opened and to come to faith in Christ. And notice at the end, verse 32, their hearts' desires ran ahead of their faith.

So, it says, as he walked on the road with us, as he explained the Bible to us, did our hearts not burn within us? So, there was this conviction arising in their hearts, this desire for him, even before they knew what to think about him, before what they knew to believe about him.

[31 : 16] And that very well could be you today, that there's conviction and burning in your heart before you yet know exactly what to say about him, of exactly what to think about him. I don't know all the reasons that Jesus thinks it's important that you, I don't know, I don't know all the reasons for this.

But for whatever reason, Jesus thinks it's very important that we all hear him before we see him. So, on Resurrection Sunday, Jesus wanted these two men to hear him before they ever saw him. And that is exactly what the Christian life is like. For whatever reason, the Lord wants you to hear him and believe before you one day see him. This is for next week, but I imagine that maybe he opened up to them Genesis 3.15 and he said to them, look at Genesis 3.15, how it says, after the great curse upon the world after sin, that one day the seed of the woman, the child of Eve, would

crush the head of the seed of the serpent.

That one day, a baby born of the lineage of Eve, born of the new Eve Mary, would crush the head of a serpent while that serpent bites his heel. And if a serpent bites your heel, that's poisonous, you die from that.

But at the same time, the little child would crush the head of the serpent. And they realized, oh, their heart started to burn. And they said, whoa, that's you. That's Jesus.

[32 : 48] And they woke up and they had the eyes of faith. And that's exactly what happens here. It's incredibly ordinary. And the last thing he uses is the table. So down in verse 30, they've arrived at Emmaus and we read in verse 30 that he sat with them at the table and he took bread and he blessed it and he broke it and he gave it to them.

Now, some theologians and scholars say that this is not the Lord's Supper, but I think that that's a misunderstanding. These are the four communion verbs. He took it, he blessed it, he broke it, he gave it.

And the slight misunderstanding there is because any time you sit down to eat dinner with the resurrected Lord, that's the Lord's Supper. He is the host. You can't sit down with Jesus and not eat the Lord's Supper.

He is the Lord, after all. So this is the Lord's Supper with the resurrected Lord and it says that as soon as he broke the bread and handed it to them, their eyes were opened.

They believed and he disappeared. And that's just to say, that's week three, the Lord's Supper. But today, notice how ordinary the word and the table.

[34 : 00] and that's the paradigm of our eyes being opened in faith in the Christian life. Now, I'll finish last word here. This is not a scheme imposed on this text.

It's the very shape of Christian worship. So, by the second century, AD 155, you can open up a text like Justin Martyr who's writing out early Christian liturgy. And what does he say?

He says that someone stood up and explained the apostles' teaching and then they ate at a feast and broke bread and passed out wine. So, the word and the table, exactly what we're doing today is exactly the order of worship that has been done to open the eyes of faith since not just the second century but the road to Emmaus, the first century.

And it's not just about getting worship right and all that. It's about the heart. John Wesley, John Wesley in 1738, the great revivalist of the 18th century, he went to a meeting at Aldersgate Street down in England and he was listening to someone read out aloud Luther's preface to the Romans and then explain the book of Romans.

And this is what he says, in the evening, I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street where one was reading Luther's preface to the epistle of the Romans. About a quarter before nine while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed.

[35 : 29] I felt that I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation. And an assurance was given to me in that moment that he really had taken away my sins, even my sins.

The divine passive becomes the divine active. The one who keeps our eyes closed then opens them. And that very well may happen for you today.

And it may have happened for some of you in the past, but today as we come through the word and to the table, would you be open to being the second traveler and having your eyes opened afresh and your faith restored?

Because this actually happened. This is real. And it's the whole of the Christian life. So let's pray. Father, we ask that you would open our eyes today as we come to your table.

Thank you for your word. We ask, Lord, for the divine active that you would be active in our lives now. So we pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit now as we come to commune with you.

[36 : 29] And we pray that in Christ's name. Amen.