# Easter, Lesson #2

## Good Questions Have Small Groups Talking [www.joshhunt.com](http://www.joshhunt.com)

### Luke 24.13 - 35

### OPEN

Let’s each share your name and what is the next trip you have planned?

### DIG

1. Locate Emmaus on a map. ;-)

Perhaps still on the first day of the week, two disciples were going home to Emmaus after having been with the disciple band in Jerusalem. Modern scholars have no consensus about the precise location of Emmaus, although several sites have been suggested. — Trent C. Butler, *Luke, vol. 3, Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 416.

1. Who were these disciples?

Indeed, all those who had followed Christ were still in despair that afternoon, though they had heard bits and pieces about the empty tomb. As we pick up the story, two of them were on the road to a village named Emmaus, located a short distance from Jerusalem. One of them is identified as Cleopas (v. 18; cf. John 19:25—I believe the “Clopas” mentioned there is the “Cleopas” in Luke 24), a blood relative—Jesus’ uncle, the brother of his father Joseph. The best guess as to who the other traveler was is that it was his wife Mary, as she is identified in John 19:25. Uncle Cleopas and Aunt Mary, overcome with grief, were making the sad journey back to their lodging in Emmaus. — R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 404–405.

1. Verses 14, 15. Try to put yourself in the scene. How do you think the disciples sounded? What was the tone of this conversation?

Considering everything that had happened over the last few days, the conversation between these traveling companions must have been animated. — Philip Graham Ryken*, Luke, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, vol. 2, Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 643.

1. How do you think Jesus felt as He listened?

This scene fascinates me—two sincere disciples telling how the last nail has been driven in Israel’s coffin. God, in disguise, listens patiently, his wounded hands buried deeply in his robe. He must have been touched at the faithfulness of this pair. Yet he also must have been a bit chagrined. He had just gone to hell and back to give heaven to earth, and these two were worried about the political situation of Israel.

“But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.”

But we had hoped . . . How often have you heard a phrase like that?

“We were hoping the doctor would release him.”

“I had hoped to pass the exam.”

“We had hoped the surgery would get all the tumor.”

“I thought the job was in the bag.”

Words painted gray with disappointment. What we wanted didn’t come. What came, we didn’t want. The result? Shattered hope. The foundation of our world trembles.

We trudge up the road to Emmaus dragging our sandals in the dust, wondering what we did to deserve such a plight. “What kind of God would let me down like this?” — Max Lucado, *The Lucado Inspirational Reader: Hope and Encouragement for Your Everyday Life* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011).

1. Verses 15, 16. Why didn’t they recognize Jesus?

Their conversation was interrupted by a new traveler. Jesus joined the pair on the way to Emmaus. As he walked quietly with them, they did not recognize him. But walking with strangers along the roads of Jerusalem must not have been unusual. Their lack of recognition did not come from his being a stranger. It came because God kept them from recognizing him until God was ready for the Son to be known. — Trent C. Butler, *Luke, vol. 3, Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 416.

1. Do you think it is ever true of us—that God is with us and we don’t know it?

Did God care? Indeed he did! And our resurrected Lord understood perfectly the confusion in their hearts. Cleopas and Mary moved ever so slowly along the road to Emmaus. Others rushed past them, but they did not even notice. But the resurrected Christ knew not only their geographical location but the terrain of their souls. The omniscient Savior understood!

The word omniscient sounds so cosmic and cold, but Jesus’ knowledge of his followers is tender and personal. As the Psalmist wrote, “You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways” (Psalm 139:2, 3). We may feel insignificant and alone, but when we see Jesus fresh from the cosmic trauma of death and resurrection monitoring the footsteps and heartbeats of a despairing couple, we know that we too are known and loved. — R. Kent Hughes*, Luke: That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 406.

1. How do we get better at recognizing the presence of God in our lives?

The most consistent way I have learned to recognize the voice of Jesus in my life is by applying the imagery from Luke 24:32: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

Do you have moments when you are thinking about God or reading Scripture and your heart begins to “burn”? It’s a hard thing to describe to another person, and yet it is as real as a hunger pang or a strong emotion.

One of the mistakes I made as a younger Christian was to pay too little attention to those moments when my heart “burned.” I spent too much time looking for unmistakable, dramatic interventions of God in my life (which I have only experienced a handful of times) and too little time looking for the subtle but real moments when my heart was burning.

This passage helped me to realize that Jesus was speaking to me much more frequently than I initially thought. Sometimes the “burn” would come in the midst of a conversation, and a phrase would stick in my mind for the rest of the day. Sometimes the burn would come from an idea stimulated by listening to music or going for a run. Oftentimes it would happen through a sermon I was listening to or a passage of Scripture I was reading.

But I still didn’t take it far enough. Recognizing those moments is one thing, but translating them into opportunities for spiritual intimacy is another. I was doing the first; I was recognizing with greater frequency that Jesus was moving in my life. But I wasn’t doing the second; whatever event was next up in my schedule would distract me, and the potency of what had happened slowly began to dissipate. Within a day or two I wouldn’t even remember the burning moment I had with God.

Some of the best strides I’ve made in my ability to walk intimately with God have come from marrying the revelations I’m given by God with the choice to engage him in that very moment. I must fuse those two together—recognizing the moments of my heart burning and then saturating myself in those moments through meditation.

Now whenever I sense my heart burning, I treat it as a spiritually sacred moment. Even if it is a slight burn, I choose to interpret it as an invitation from God. From a practical standpoint, I have learned that it’s important for me to record both the cause of the burn and the content of the burn right away, with the intent of meditating on it later in the day. Sometimes that means scribbling it down on a random scrap of paper. Often it means recording it into my iPhone (I like this, because I can pretend I’m talking on my phone while actually creating an audio file for myself of what just happened).

I try to create space later that same day to take a walk and to meditate on that which made my heart burn. I treat the whole thing as a Jesus-sparked encounter, designed for the purpose of spiritual intimacy. I ask Jesus to guide me into deeper truth about whatever the idea or topic was. I ask him to help me understand what this particular word might mean. I ask him to reveal more of God to me through the meditation and to take me deeper into the secret place of the Most High.

At the end of the day, it’s always about being deeply connected to the everlasting, never-changing truth about God. God is on the search for us, pursuing us to experience spiritual intimacy. Jesus is trying to lead us past our fears, through the lies, and into this very reality. — Daniel Hill, John Ortberg, and Nancy Ortberg, *10:10: Life to the Fullest* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014).

1. Verse 18. Why is Cleopas’ question ironic?

The question in verse 18 creates another one of the situational ironies that Luke uses to such dramatic effect in his Gospel. In truth, Cleopas was the one who did not know what was happening in Jerusalem! Jesus knew it all, better than anyone, for it had happened to him! He alone could explain what had transpired during his Jewish and Roman trials. He alone could testify what it was like to be mocked and tortured and to die in disgrace. He alone had felt the thorny crown upon his brow and the steely nail through his hands and feet. He alone could describe the inside of the dark tomb at the first light of the resurrection.

Instead of being the only person who did not know what was happening, Jesus was the only person who did! But rather than acting like a know-it-all, he took the time to help these disciples see their salvation. “What things?” he said in verse 19, inviting them to tell him what they understood. This is good evangelism: asking people questions that help clarify where they are in relationship to Jesus. — Philip Graham Ryken, *Luke, ed. Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani, vol. 2, Reformed Expository Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), 645.

1. Verse 21. Redeem is a word we use in church, but not a lot outside of church. What did it mean before it was a church word?

Christ’s death ended apostolic hopes. Here Cleopas in a very important passage summarized the hopes of Jesus’ disciples before Jesus’ death. They thought Jesus would redeem Israel. This Greek verb for redeem (lutroo) appears only here and in Titus 2:14 and 1 Peter 1:18 in the New Testament. It has a strong Old Testament background, appearing ninety times in the Septuagint, usually as a translation of Hebrew gal’al, “to set free, redeem.” It is rooted in the Exodus story of God redeeming Israel from Egyptian slavery (see Exod. 6:6). Luke used a related noun as Zechariah prophesied the work of his son John. God is coming to redeem his people. Anna explained the significance of the child Jesus to those who waited for the “redemption of Jerusalem” (2:38).

The term is often used in the process of paying a ransom or price to gain the freedom of a slave. Luke sees Israel in captivity just as they had been in the time of the Exodus. In sending John and Jesus, God had repeated the miracle of the Exodus. He had paid the ransom price and freed his people from slavery. But the freedom was not through military victory as in Egypt but through the work on the cross, paying the price for the slavery to sin. Paul used a related verb to confess that by Christ’s death we are set free, redeemed, ransomed from our slavery to sin and death. Christ is the one who sets us free, that is, redeems us (Acts 7:35). He came to give his life as a means of liberating or redeeming us (Matt. 20:26).

The disciples saw in Jesus the one who would bring a new Exodus and free the nation from its Roman captors. Instead Jesus proved to be something much more—the Redeemer who freed them from sin and death. But at this point the two on the road to Emmaus had no idea of this. — Trent C. Butler, *Luke, vol. 3, Holman New Testament Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 417.

1. Verses 22 – 24. Why didn’t they believe the reports of Jesus’ resurrection?

The first mistake of the duo was to disregard the words of their fellow disciples. God reveals his will through a community of believers. On the first Easter, he spoke through women who spoke to the others. “Today some women among us amazed us. Early this morning they went to the tomb, but they did not find his body there. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said Jesus was alive” (Luke 24:22–23).

His plan hasn’t changed. Jesus still speaks to believers through believers. “The whole body depends on Christ, and all the parts of the body are joined and held together. Each part does its own work to make the whole body grow and be strong with love” (Eph. 4:15).

While I was driving to my office this morning, my eye saw a traffic light. The sensors within my eye perceived that the color of the light was red. My brain checked my memory bank and announced the meaning of a red light to my right foot. My right foot responded by leaving the accelerator and pressing the brake.

Now what if my body hadn’t functioned properly? What if my eye had decided not to be a part of the body because the nose had hurt its feelings? Or what if the foot was tired of being bossed around and decided to press the gas pedal instead of the brake? Or what if the right foot was in pain, but too proud to tell the left foot, so the left foot didn’t know to step in and help? In all instances, a wreck would occur.

God has given each part of the body of Christ an assignment. One way God reveals his will to you is through the church. He speaks to one member of his body through another member. It could happen in a Bible class, a small group, during communion, or during dessert. God has as many methods as he has people.

That, by the way, is why Satan doesn’t want you in church. You’ve noticed, haven’t you, that when you’re in a spiritual slump, you head out to Emmaus, too. You don’t want to be with believers. Or if you do, you sneak in and sneak out of the service, making excuses about meals to prepare or work to do. The truth is, Satan doesn’t want you hearing God’s will. And since God reveals his will to his children through other children, he doesn’t want you in a church. Nor does he want you reading your Bible. Which takes us to another way God reveals his will. — Max Lucado, *The Great House of God: A Home for Your Heart* (Dallas: Word Pub., 1997), 73–74.

1. How did their emotions affect their thinking? Do our emotions affect our thinking? How so?

They were so depressed and so negative in their confusion that it was beyond their capacity to make the obvious connection. If you have ever been depressed or tried to help someone who is depressed, you know that such people are amazingly resourceful in finding reasons not to take comfort in anything you say to them. They are determined to hear everything as bad news. And that is exactly what these two did with the news of the empty tomb. To them, the empty tomb compounded the tragedy, for they thought someone had stolen the body, adding insult to injury. So the good news was bad news! Ironically, Cleopas mentioned that it had been three days since Jesus’ death, not recalling that Jesus had said over and over before his Passion that he would be put to death and rise again on the third day (cf. 9:22; Mark 9:31; John 2:19). — R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1998), 407.

1. Verse 25. How do you imagine Jesus’ tone? Again, how do you think Jesus was feeling?

Their words drew a rather sharp rebuke from their companion. Perhaps O foolish men is a trifle strong for anoētoi, and NEB may give the sense better with, ‘How dull you are!’ But the words certainly fall short of being a compliment, and show that the two had done less than might reasonably have been expected. Incidentally men may be more definite than the Greek demands, for the two could have been man and wife (cf. 17:34, where see note). Some have thought that Cleopas’s companion was Luke himself, others that he was called Simon. But we really do not know. Jesus goes on to point out that the root of the trouble was their failure to accept what is taught in Bible prophecy. The prophets had spoken plainly enough, but the minds of Cleopas and his friend had not been quick enough to grasp what was meant. The word all is probably important. They had no doubt seized on the prediction of the glory of the Messiah, but it was quite another thing to take to heart the prophecies that pointed to the darker side of his mission. But the dark side was there, in the prophecies. And this means that the passion was not simply a possibility that might or might not become actual, depending on the circumstances: it was necessary. Written in the prophets as it was, it had to happen. The Christ must suffer. But that is not the end of it. He must also enter into his glory. God is not defeated. He triumphs through the sufferings of his Christ. — Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 357–358.

1. What Old Testament passages do you think Jesus turned to in teaching about Himself?

Wouldn’t you love to know what Jesus said when He opened the Scriptures and taught concerning Himself? I’ve often wondered what passages He used. Did He tell the story of Abraham and Isaac on Mt. Moriah? Did He preach the gospel from Isaiah 53:6? “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.” — David Jeremiah, *The Power of Encouragement* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1997), 46.

1. How did they come to believe? What is the lesson for us?

For this assignment angels wouldn’t do, an emissary wouldn’t suffice, an army of heaven’s best soldiers wouldn’t be sent. Jesus himself came to the rescue.

And how did he bolster the disciples’ faith? A thousand and one tools awaited his bidding. He had marked Friday’s crucifixion with an earthquake and a solar eclipse. Matthew’s gospel reveals that “saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many” (27:52–53). Christ could have summoned a few of them to chat with the Emmaus disciples. Or he could have toured them through the empty tomb. For that matter he could have made the rocks speak or a fig tree dance a jig. But Christ did none of these things. What did he do? “Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:27 NLT).

Well, what do you know. Christ conducted a Bible class. He led the Emmaus-bound duo through an Old Testament survey course, from the writings of Moses (Genesis though Deuteronomy) into the messages of Isaiah, Amos, and the others. He turned the Emmaus trail into a biblical timeline, pausing to describe . . . the Red Sea rumbling? Jericho tumbling? King David stumbling? Of special import to Jesus was what the “Scriptures said about himself.” His face watermarks more Old Testament stories than you might imagine. Jesus is Noah, saving humanity from disaster; Abraham, the father of a new nation; Isaac, placed on the altar by his father; Joseph, sold for a bag of silver; Moses, calling slaves to freedom; Joshua, pointing out the Promised Land.

Jesus “took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets.” Can you imagine Christ quoting Old Testament scripture? Did Isaiah 53 sound this way: “I was wounded and crushed for your sins. I was beaten that you might have peace” (v. 5)? Or Isaiah 28: “I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem. It is firm, a tested and precious cornerstone that is safe to build on” (v. 16)? Did he pause and give the Emmaus students a wink, saying, “I’m the stone Isaiah described”? We don’t know his words, but we know their impact. The two disciples felt “our hearts burning within us while he talked” (Luke 24:32 NIV).

By now the trio had crossed northwesterly out of the rocky hills into a scented, gardened valley of olive groves and luscious fruit trees. Jerusalem’s grief and bloodshed lay to their backs, forgotten in the conversation. The seven-mile hike felt more like a half-hour stroll. All too quickly fled the moments; the disciples wanted to hear more. “By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, but they begged him, ‘Stay the night with us.’ . . . As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!” (vv. 28–31 NLT).

Jesus taught the Word and broke the bread, and then like a mist on a July morning, he was gone. The Emmaus men weren’t far behind. The pair dropped the broken loaf, grabbed their broken dreams, raced back to Jerusalem, and burst in on the apostles. They blurted out their discovery, only to be interrupted and upstaged by Jesus himself. — Max Lucado*, Fearless: Imagine Your Life without Fear* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009).

1. Verse 31. Were their eyes just supernaturally opened, or do you think they saw something that caused them to believe?

Cleopas and the other man looked down, took the bread out of Jesus’ hand—and what did they see? A nail print. Can you imagine their reaction? I wonder what they said? I can just imagine Cleopas turning to his friend and exclaiming, “Look! Look! It’s Him! The One about whom we have talked is here in our home with us, Himself!” Then, just as quickly as He had joined them on the road, He vanished from their sight. — David Jeremiah, *The Power of Encouragement* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1997), 47.

1. How was their life different before and after this moment?

Just think of the incredible change which took place within the hearts of these men. Consider their feelings at the beginning of the journey. Recall the Bible lesson they received. Imagine seeing the Resurrected Christ. Just a few hours earlier, they were ready to give up on life; their hopes were gone. Now watch what happens. — David Jeremiah, *The Power of Encouragement* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Books, 1997), 47.

1. Verse 32. What did they mean by saying their hearts burned within them? Has it ever happened to you? Has your heart ever burned within you?

When you are feeling a little under the weather, one of the first things your doctor will want to know is your body temperature. Why? Because a drop or a rise in your temperature is an indication that something is wrong. Your temperature is an assessment of your health.

We can apply the same principle in the spiritual life. What is your spiritual temperature right now? That, too, is an indicator of your health—your spiritual health. According to Scripture, there are only three possible answers, because there are only three possible spiritual temperatures.

The first is burning hot, which means you have a heart that is on fire for God. Remember the story of the two disciples who, although they didn’t know it at the time, encountered the risen Lord on the Emmaus road? They said, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32). A burning heart is the best spiritual temperature of all.

The second temperature is cold. Jesus said, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold” (Matt. 24:12). This would describe someone who is just going through the motions and, for all practical purposes, is spiritually lifeless.

Then there is lukewarm. It may surprise you to know that of the three spiritual temperatures, this is the most offensive to Jesus. In fact, lukewarm is even more offensive to Him than being icy cold. — Greg Laurie, *For Every Season, Volume Two* (Dana Point, CA: Kerygma Publishing—Allen David Books, 2011).

1. This is a story about disciples who doubted. Do you ever doubt? What are we to do when we doubt?

Oswald Chambers said, “Doubt is not always a sign that a man is wrong. It may be a sign that he is thinking.” There is a difference between doubt and unbelief. Doubt is a matter of the mind. Unbelief is a matter of the heart. Doubt is when we cannot understand what God is doing and why He is doing it. Unbelief is when we refuse to believe God’s Word and do what He tells us to do. We must not confuse the two.

Remember the discouraged disciples on the Emmaus road? In their minds, Jesus had failed in His mission and had been crucified. Jesus joined them on that road and began to speak with them. In the end, they said, “Didn’t our hearts feel strangely warm as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32 NLT). God dealt with their doubt through His Word. And God will deal with your doubt through His Word. When you are facing doubt, that is not the time to close the Bible. That is the time to open it and let God speak to you.

Maybe you have been doubting God’s ways in your life. Maybe you have been asking “why” a lot lately. Maybe His timing doesn’t seem to make any sense. The Bible says, “All that I know now is partial and incomplete, but then I will know everything completely, just as God knows me now” (1 Corinthians 13:12 NLT). It all will be resolved in that final day when we stand before God. God doesn’t ask us to understand everything. He asks us to trust Him and follow Him. — Greg Laurie*, For Every Season: Daily Devotions* (Dana Point, CA: Kerygma Publishing—Allen David Books, 2011).

1. What do we learn about following Jesus from this story?

First, Jesus initiates this encounter by entering into their conversation, but then he waits for them to reciprocate before taking it any further. They beg Jesus to “stay with us” (v. 29). It’s important to recognize how Jesus is already pursuing us and then to follow that up by telling Jesus how badly we want his continued leadership and guidance in our lives.

Second, this story shows again how intimate faith is intended to be. Jesus does not appear to them as a removed deity or as an abstract ideal. He sat at a table and shared a meal with them, and it was within this intimate exchange that they experienced spiritual revelation. Jesus really is risen and resurrected, and we really are attached to him by faith.

Third and finally, this encounter gives us language to understand what it means to hear the voice of Jesus. I have referred throughout to John 10 and Jesus’s insistence that the sheep know the voice of the shepherd. But even when we take that promise at face value, it can be confusing at times to know exactly how to recognize the voice of Jesus. — Daniel Hill, John Ortberg, and Nancy Ortberg, *10:10: Life to the Fullest* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2014).

1. How can we support one another in prayer this week?