

Easter: But We Had Hoped

(Luke 24:13-35)

I. Introduction

- A. I don't want to get your hopes up... No, really, just I don't want to get your hopes up
1. Because nothing is more crushing than to have your hopes and dreams dashed
 - a. Like guy who proposed at half-court at NBA game 10 years ago... and she said no
 - b. Or you go into boss' office for you think is going to be commendation and raise...
 - c. Or you visit the doctor's office for what is supposed to be just a routine check-up...
 - d. Or you settle in at church for what you are sure is just going to be a short sermon...
 2. Life has a way of jumping up and jumping in to stomp all over our hopes and dreams
 - a. And death is the ultimate disappointment! There's nothing a bit subtle about death
 - b. There's no greater crushing hopes & dreams than the closing of casket of loved one
 - 1) Martha said at Lazarus' grave, "*if only you had been here*" ([John 11:21](#), NLT)
 - 2) Two disciples on Emmaus, "*We had hoped that he was the one*" ([Luke 24:21](#))
 3. The last two funerals I attended played the last song we sang—"There's a Stirring"
 - a. Without that assurance that we will all rise up, how could we face a graveside?
 - b. Without the story behind Easter Sunday, death is the ultimate disappointment!
- B. Think about how bitter and crushing was disappointment of the cross on the disciples.
1. These men and women had given everything, they poured their very lives into Him
 - a. Remember what Peter said when Rich Young Ruler failed discipleship challenge?
 - 1) Ruler asks Jesus, "*What good thing must I do to get eternal life*" ([Matt 19:16](#))
 - 2) Jesus points to Law, he asked, "*Been there, done that; what else you got?*"
 - b. Jesus, "*Sell your possessions and give to the poor...then come, follow me*" ([19:21](#))
 - 1) This answer takes awhile to process, but Peter finally gets it ([Matt 19:27](#))
 - 2) Peter and the rest had gone all in on the idea that Jesus was Christ the Lord
 2. Peter and friends weren't exactly wealthy men; they were just ordinary fisherman
 - a. But on the day Peter decided to follow Jesus, he was the wealthiest he'd ever be!
 - 1) Remember the story, right? Jesus tells him to cast his net on the other side
 - 2) He pulls in a miraculous catch of fish and falls at Jesus knees ([Luke 5:8](#))
 - b. How does Peter and his partners respond to this fish profit windfall? ([Luke 5:9-11](#))
 - c. They left a boatload in the boat to follow Jesus... and boat! Completely invested!

- C. What would Peter and the rest do now Jesus was dead? *All the eggs were in one basket!*
1. Maybe that explains why they so resisted believing Jesus when he predicted his death
 - a. In Matthew 16, Jesus plainly told them he would be would be killed and raised
 - b. Peter pulled him aside, “*Never Lord! This shall never happen to you!*” (**16:22**)
 - 1) This could not be! Jesus had to be king! He just had to sit on David’s throne!
 - 2) Peter and the rest just had too much invested in him for that not to be true!
 - c. They all watched their hopes & dreams die on the cross just as surely as Jesus died
 2. That brings us back to those two disciples on the Emmaus Road in **Luke 24**.
 - a. Cleopas and his friend were leaving Jerusalem for Emmaus, located 7 miles away
 - 1) Why? Because they had given up. Luke says they are “*downcast*” (**Lk 24:17**)
 - 2) One commentator suggests the word here can be translated “*looking glum.*”
 - b. They begin talking to another traveler who doesn’t seem to have much of a clue
 - c. As it turns out, He had much more than just a clue (**Reading: Luke 24:13-21**)

II. What Strikes Us About This Story?

- A. **First**, why didn’t the disciples recognize Jesus when he first joined them?
1. The failure to recognize Jesus is a part of many of the post-resurrection stories
 - a. Mary Magdalene had a conversation and didn’t recognize it was Jesus (**John 20:14**)
 - b. Disciples went on fishing trip and saw Jesus and didn’t recognize Him (**John 21:4**)
 - c. There’s the strange report of some doubting before great commission (**Matt 28:17**)
 2. Luke tells us the two disciples “*were kept from recognizing him*” (**Luke 24:16**)
 - a. Did Jesus do something to stay incognito? Maybe a disguise? Maybe a miracle?
 - 1) You see Jesus in painting with Mary Magdalene wearing a robe with big hood...
 - 2) Maybe he’s like Luke Skywalker with Jedi hood! Maybe it’s a Jedi mind trick!
 - b. I tend to think it’s miracle— they are kept from seeing until they’re meant to see
 3. But could it also be that what kept from seeing Jesus was **grief and loss of hope**?
 - a. Jesus was the last person they’d expect to join them on their retreat from Jerusalem
 - 1) Their hope had been so thoroughly crushed by the cross—they had no hope
 - 2) Their brain could not register what their eyes were seeing right in front of them
 - b. Maybe they were so crushed by past they couldn’t past it to any future... or present
 - 1) Could it be disappointment was enough to have kept them from seeing Jesus?
 - 2) I don’t know. I could have been. Some of you know that it CAN BE enough!

B. **Second**, why are these disciples so slow on the uptake here?

1. Surely **ALL** the disciples had heard Jesus predict His coming resurrection
 - a. Jesus enemies heard of His prediction of the resurrection. Read the bulletin article.
 - b. We can assume that Cleopas and his unnamed friend knew what Jesus promised
2. Keep that in mind as they explain to this stranger some of their women told them—
 - a. **First**, they highlight that this was all on the third day after the crucifixion ([24:21b](#))
 - b. **Second**, body was gone from the tomb; angels said that Jesus was alive ([24:22-23](#))
 - c. **Third**, their companions (likely Peter and John) had confirmed tomb empty ([24:24](#))
3. But they then scratch their heads, “*We just don’t know what to make of all this?*”
 - a. Their travelling companion suggest that they have two basic problems ([25-26](#))
 - b. They’re being “*foolish*” or “*dense*” (*nicer*) and “*slow to believe*” (*real problem*)
 - c. He opens the scriptures to them and begins to teach what it says about Him ([24:27](#))

C. Again, did they (*and the rest of the disciples for that matter*) so resist the resurrection?

1. Jesus told them on three different occasions in great detail ([Luke 18:31-33](#))
 - a. So why was the cross a shock? Why was resurrection such a stretch for them?
 - b. We can’t just say, “*People don’t rise from dead every day!*” They were with Christ!
 - 1) They had seen that before! They had hung out with Lazarus after the fact!
 - 2) Resurrection wasn’t problem; not believing the cross ended everything was!
 - c. They thought the crucifixion ended their hopes and dreams—couldn’t get past that
2. Luke suggest they were prevented from understanding all this. ([Luke 18:34](#))
 - a. How? What hid the meaning of Jesus words here? *Was this a miracle thing?*
 - 1) Could be, but I doubt it; they’re too capable of misunderstanding on own!
 - 2) They are so locked into one understanding of Messiah—this makes no sense!
 - b. Jesus is the last person Cleopas and his friend are looking for on Emmaus Road
 - 1) They had already given up on the dream; they have already given up on hope
 - 2) They were leaving Jerusalem for Emmaus, likely going back to their old lives
3. Something about breaking bread allows them to recognize Jesus ([Luke 24:30-32](#))
 - a. Perhaps the promise that Christ would eat the bread with them ([Luke 22:16](#))
 - 1) Max Lucado suggest that when Jesus offers them bread, they see the nail scars
 - 2) Whatever it was, Emmaus is forgotten; they return to Jerusalem and to faith
 - b. Their message and our message is Christ the Lord is risen ([Luke 24:33-35](#))

III. Conclusion

- A. James Martin in Wall Street Journal talks about how stressed out we are this time of year
1. You know, with all the Easter shopping we do and the Easter cards to address
 - a. Then there are all the Easter parties and the tacky Easter sweaters
 - b. And every year we lament about how overly commercialized Easter has become.
 2. Right? Wrong! Easter hasn't fallen victim to "*crassification*" of Christmas. Why?
 - a. Martin suggests Easter maintains "*subversive religious message: Christ is risen.*"
 - b. That what I referred to earlier on the beach as kind of "*Cosmic Freudian Slip*"
 - 1) When culture observe Easter at all, it acknowledges "*something is out there*"
 - 2) You really can't make a cartoon out of the crucified and resurrected Christ
 - c. The message of the resurrection really makes a claim on you and on your life!
 3. If Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead, the Christ is Lord of all
 - a. That makes Him Lord of ME, and puts reins of my life in His nail-scarred hands
 - b. That can't be a Santa-type thing. So Easter will never be a commercial hit!
- B. But the message of Easter, that is, resurrection, is the central message of Christianity
1. Because Christian was raised, we will be raised; death will not be the death of me!
 - a. The grave is not the end. Sin and death do not get the final word— not ever
 - b. My failures, my flaws, my mistakes do not have to continue to define who I am
 2. We're united with Christ in His death on cross and in His resurrection (**Rom 6:5-7**)
 - a. That is Easter. New life. Crushing disappointments of the past can become past
 - b. We can become new because Christ is alive and we can become alive again
 - 1) Put your faith today in the One who died and who now lives again.
 - 2) You can participate in His death and in His resurrected life (**Rom 6:3-4**)