

# *Life After Easter*

Be wise and alert, and  
stay on mission.

A biblical inspiration from Luke  
24:13-49 where Jesus speaks to the  
disciples, addresses their confusion,  
and keeps them on mission to bless  
the world.

*by Matt Perry*



A TODAY Devotional



*Life After Easter. Be wise and alert, and stay on mission.*

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A TODAY Devotional in a series of biblical reflections to encourage Christ likeness and perseverance in hope. ‘Today’ is the day to encourage one another, to listen for God’s voice, and to turn to him with gratitude and a humble heart.

*“Encourage one another daily, as long as  
it is called ‘Today.’”*

Hebrews 3:13

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# *Life After Easter*

Be wise and alert, and  
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Introduction.

Let me say at the outset – following Jesus Christ is my life’s work, and I love being on a mission with God. I especially like being on God’s mission with other like-minded people. Wherever you are on your life’s journey with Jesus Christ, I encourage you to persevere, to be wise and alert, and to stay on mission. That’s what this booklet is all about.

For the sake of definition, I like to summarise the Mission of God from three biblical calls:

1. *Love the Lord your God with all your being.* (Mk 12:30).
2. *Love your neighbour as yourself.* (Mk 12:31).
3. *Go and make disciples of all nations.* (Matt 28:18-20/Luke 24:46-49).

For followers of Christ, the church, I see these calls as inseparable and unstoppable. In plain English let’s bundle them into two complimentary categories of *speaking and serving*:

1. Announcing the love and promises of God with outreach and discipleship efforts of all sorts.
2. Liberating people from pain and suffering, poverty, addiction and enslavement.

Whatever your inclination is as you follow Jesus and endeavour to make the world a better place, this e-booklet is offered to you as a helpful reflection on Jesus’ teaching straight after his execution and resurrection. It’s based on a well-known *Great Commission* passage in Luke 24 which comes after an interesting but confusing encounter between two disciples and the *secret-Jesus* as they walk along the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

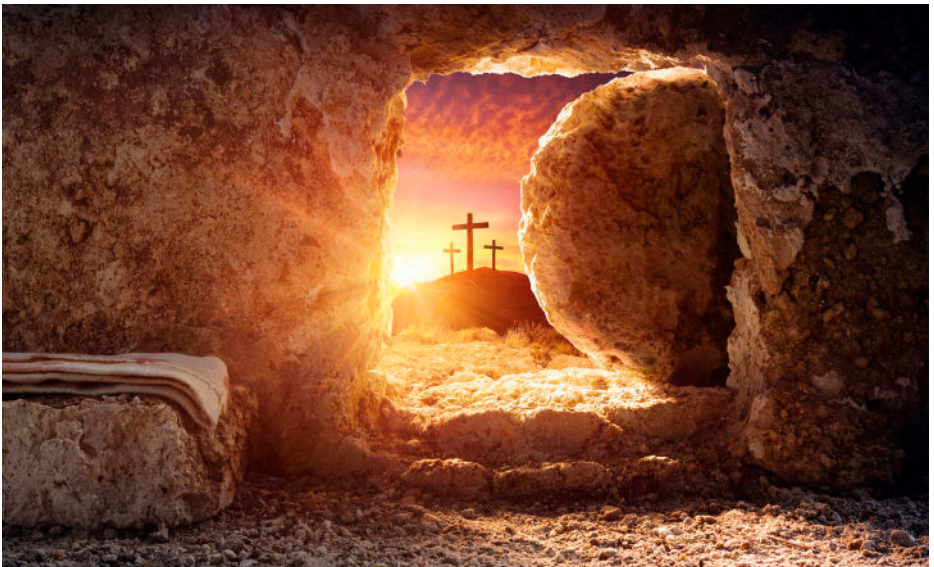
The conversation with the two on the road took place on the Sunday of the resurrection, and then Luke records the Great Commissioning which took place sometime later.

*He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."*

*Luke 24:46-47*

Jesus is giving His followers their mission in life. In a nutshell he's saying - be part of all-nations focused efforts to make known the repentance necessary and the forgiveness available to everyone, because of my life, suffering, death, and resurrection.

Interestingly, to get to this commissioning moment Jesus confronts two of the disciples with some important lessons that are still vital today to keep us, the church, on-mission. If you haven't already, why not open your Bible or Bible app to Luke chapter 24.



# *Is there a problem?*

On the Sunday of the Easter weekend, two of Jesus' disciples, Cleopas and another, are walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus and talking about the tumultuous events of the previous week. Jesus joins them but remains unrecognised by them, and asks them what they're talking about. Cleopas is astonished that anyone would ask such a question as there is clearly only one subject on everyone's lips. But the two disciples have just, unwittingly, been asked to explain their faith in light of Easter. Let's read the disciples' reply 24:19-27:

*“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 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. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”*

Yes, there is a problem, and it is revealed in the way the disciples view Jesus and his words. We know this because in this conversation as they walk along the road, Jesus responds to their explanation with something quite tough and telling. He said these words:

*“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (24:25).*

Now if you're about to commission a group of people to take on the most world-changing mission of all time, for all time, you are not likely to hand it over to foolish and slow people. So, Jesus goes on to teach them some vital mission survival truths.

Why does Jesus call these disciples foolish and slow? What's the problem?

# *What's the problem?*

## The disciples reduced Jesus.

V.19 ... *“He was a prophet, ...*

Jesus was and is not just “a prophet”! These disciples had let the circumstances redefine who Jesus really is, and had settled for an inadequate interpretation of the *Son of Man*, the *Son of God*.

Jesus had spent three years building their view of His true divine nature. After feeding the 5000, this was the conversation:

*“Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, “Who do the crowds say I am?”*

*They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life.”*

*“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”*

*Peter answered, “God’s Messiah.”*

*Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” (Luke 9:18-22)*

The disciples know full well that Jesus is not simply ‘a prophet’, or ‘one of the prophets.’ He is Messiah, the Anointed One.

Missions and the spread of the church is built on people moving from the idea that Jesus is *just a prophet*, to hearing and recognising that Jesus is Lord and God. He is the image of the invisible God (Hebrews 1:3).



Throughout his ministry Jesus had been clearly identified as the *Son of the Most High* (Luke 1:32); *God's Beloved Son* (3:22); *even demons called him the Son of God* (4:41); *He is the "Messiah"* (9:35); and His own favourite self-description "*the Son of Man*" is used multiple times throughout the gospels.

But when the worst thing happened and Jesus was actually arrested and crucified as predicted, the disciples seem to forget all his promises and miracles, and they treat him like an ordinary man, and they call him "a prophet." Not even THE prophet. This is the worst demotion in history!

So, Jesus reminds them in verse 26 "*Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?*"

In your life of mission today, consider carefully who you say Jesus is. Make it your practice to honour him and worship him in truth as Lord, and King, Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer. Let us not be tempted to equate Jesus Christ with other wise teachers and leaders. Christ alone arose from the grave and ascended to heaven in front of witnesses.

*"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to humankind by which we must be saved."*

(Acts 4:12)

*Reflection notes:*

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# *What's the problem?*

The disciples gave up hope quickly.

*"... 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."* (Emphasis added).

The disciples' hope is weak because they are not trusting deeply in the promises of God, and they are looking on the circumstances instead of trusting the Jesus they know. Yes, the circumstances look bad. Jesus was tortured and crucified, and buried, dead. But he had promised to rise on the third day, and they had been told that the tomb was empty! And yet, they still do not trust Jesus! The disciples settle for a simple earthly "hope." A hope that says "maybe he will, maybe he won't, but I hope he rises!"

He had said he would arise. He had raised others, performed miracles, and given them every possible reason to trust totally in Jesus' own resurrection. And it wasn't even sunset on the third day!

In your life of mission today, trust Jesus, trust the evidence of his life and words and actions. Luke 8:15 says that to be fruitful in our Christian life we must "hold on tightly" to the word of God in an honest and good heart. Persevering in the life of faith in God.

Holding on tightly means keeping a determined and strong grip. Don't let anyone or anything rip your faith out of your hands. Think of an All Black with the ball in hand. They're gripping it tightly, shielding it with their arms and body with all their strength. Think of a Silver Fern with the netball. They twist and turn and duck, using all their strength and body to keep that ball in hand.

Don't give up hope in Jesus. Hold on to his word, hold on tightly to all his promises.

# *What's the problem?*

The disciples wanted more physical proof.

*"In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus [himself]."*  
(Emphasis added)

The disciples have Jesus' own promises of resurrection, they have an empty tomb, an angelic visitation with news of resurrection, and they have testimony from women and men they know to be faithful. ***And yet they want to see Jesus "Himself."***

They refuse to believe in the resurrection until Jesus actually presents himself. Sure, an empty tomb without yet seeing Jesus is disappointing, but they should trust ALL the evidence. That's what the rest of humanity has to do.

This is why Jesus calls them *"Foolish and slow of heart."* The word "foolish" means 'dull' and 'sensual.' The disciples are not being faithful with their knowledge of Jesus from the previous weeks. They are relying on their common natural senses, insisting on seeing him, touching him, hearing him. But *"faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see."* (Hebrews 11:1)

In your life of mission today, trust the Word of God and trust Jesus' promises without insisting that he appear in front of us physically and explain everything again, and to our liking. The resurrection and ascension is 'physical' evidence that Jesus word is trustworthy. He demonstrated his Lordship by overcoming the grave, and we do not need more 'proof' that he tells us the truth.

Let us not be dull nor slow to believe what the prophets have spoken.

# *What's the problem?*

## The disciples lacked faith in “all” the scriptures.

The two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and possibly the other eleven disciples as well, lack an all-encompassing perspective on scripture. Do they believe only the pleasant bits? Have they discounted the hard words about suffering, persecution, and death that Jesus prophesied must take place before the resurrection? I suspect so.

Jesus said that they were “slow of heart to believe *all* that the prophets have spoken.” Verse 25. Then “beginning with Moses and *all* the prophets, he explained to them what was said in *all* the scriptures concerning himself.” Verse 27.

Later on when the two catch-up with the other disciples, Jesus says “*Everything* must be fulfilled that is written about me in the law of Moses..”

*All, all, all, everything...*

This emphasis from Jesus own lips cannot be ignored. We need all the words of the prophets for a full appreciation of scripture and a thorough picture of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Only at this point are the disciples ready to receive our Great Commission (24:46). Only when Jesus had thoroughly explained that redemption and resurrection could only come via a humiliating death. Jesus’ repetition of the word “all” is a big clue. These two well-meaning disciples on the road to Emmaus needed to know the real Jesus. He was always going to be a *suffering servant* (Isaiah 52:13-15), and the *Son of Man*. He was always going to be the *Redeemer of Israel* (Daniel 7:13-14), with all authority, glory, and sovereign power! Humiliation, serving others, and suffering go hand in hand with Sonship, authority, and God’s glory!

In your life of mission today, let us not pick and choose what is pleasant and agreeable in the Bible, but study and search for Jesus' likeness and lessons everywhere.

## *Staying On-Mission.*

How do the disciples go from this state of 'foolishness,' to mission readiness?

With Jesus' help, and instructions. His teaching and friendship revealed that the way to avoid being foolish and slow - is twofold:

1. *We need the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit opening our eyes and our minds.*
2. *We need to remember what Jesus told us, and what is written in the Word of God.*



# *The supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.*

*“When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 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?” (Luke 24:30-32)*

Via both a visual sign (the breaking of bread) and the divine work of God, finally the disciples *recognise Jesus*.

The supernatural work of God opens our ‘spiritual eyes’ to see and recognise Jesus, and what he is doing in the world around us. Jesus does this for the disciples without any input from them! Their qualification was - dullness!

Verse 45 tells us that Jesus deliberately and supernaturally grants his followers prophetic insight of the Word of God.

*“Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.” (24:45).*

What a wonderful daily habit it would be to ask God for these ‘eyes’ and for this understanding.

*Lord, I don't see you as clearly as I'd like to, and I don't understand your word as well as I could. Please open my eyes to recognise you, and to see you at work in the world around me. Please open my mind to understand your Word and apply it to my life, my community, and this world today. Come Holy Spirit.*

# *Remember the Word of God.*

God often calls his people to “remember.” When the women went to the tomb of Jesus on the day of the resurrection, it was the angels who urged them with these words:

*“Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinners, be crucified, and on the third day be raised again.” (24:6-7)*

We should note carefully, this is not a question. It is a command. *Remember!*

Even after Cleopas and the other disciple testified to actually meeting Jesus on the Emmaus Road, some of the other disciples were still doubtful and troubled, so Jesus showed them his hands and his feet, and asked for something to eat.

“He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.” (24:44)

In other words, ‘remember’ what I told you when I was still with you.

This is where we must apply ourselves – we need reminding of the life and teaching Jesus Christ. We need reminding of the journey that God has taken humankind and all creation on. We need reminding of all that Moses and the Prophets teach us, and of God’s redemptive history, and his promises to come.

So, hand in hand with asking for supernatural understanding, we must read the Word of God, meditate on scripture, *exercise* our minds, and choose to believe and obey.

The Apostle Paul said to young Timothy (2 Timothy 2:7)

*Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.”*

To “think over” is to ‘consider,’ to ‘exercise the mind.’ I encourage you to continuously find time in your days to read, pray, and create thinking spaces. To remember and recognise Jesus in the world, to pursue his presence and activity, and to join in.

## *A new confession.*

What could be our faithful confession? What might we say in the place of the ‘foolish and slow’ reply of the two disciples? What would be a good faith statement that we could hold on to as we come to the end of Luke’s Gospel and consider Jesus’ Great Commission given to us? – that repentance and forgiveness will be preached in Christ’s name to all nations.

In the place of what the two disciples did say (24:19-24), we could say the following:

*About Jesus of Nazareth. He is the Son of Man, the Christ of God, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and the rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death just as Jesus warned us, and they crucified him, just like he prophesied; but we know and trust that he is the Redeemer Lord. And what’s more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our friends amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning, and of course, they didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who confirmed he was alive. Then some others went to the tomb and found it just as our friends had said, so of course they didn’t see him either because he is alive, he is risen!*

If you can say this with conviction and hope – then you are on track in your life of mission, whatever unique shape that takes.

# *“Peace be with you.”*

Right in the middle of this encounter, Jesus appears to his followers and blesses them.

Between walking on the Emmaus Road, questioning the two confused disciples, and commissioning all the disciples for our future global ministry, Jesus miraculously appears among them in a locked room, and says:

*“Peace be with you.”*

The risen Jesus Christ commands wholeness, completeness, soundness, health, Shalom for your life. This comes from the One who has conquered sin and death and who gives graciously and freely to all who turn to him and trust in him for salvation. The Peace of Jesus is not a passing feeling but a permanent transcendent wholeness and pleasure.

As you follow Jesus Christ, and pursue his mission in the world, I pray that you will be wise and alert, that you will be filled with the Holy Spirit and deliberately remember God’s Word and promises. I pray that you will enjoy his friendship and company, knowingly and unknowingly, and that from time to time your heart will burn with joy and amazement as he inspires you in your unique life.

Peace be with you.





“ MAY THE LORD *Bless you* AND  
*keep you*; THE LORD MAKE HIS FACE  
*shine* ON YOU AND BE *gracious*  
TO YOU; *The Lord* TURN HIS FACE  
TOWARD YOU, AND GIVE YOU *peace*.”

*Numbers 6:24-26*



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