



BREAKING OPEN

Scripture Study

Easter 3A



Room to Wonder: On the Road to Recognition

Dennis Webster

A weekly reflection based on the teachings at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville, together with a study guide based on the readings, some liturgical resources RCL Lectionary, and a weekly devotion

Revised Common Lectionary Related

Easter 3A

Acts 2.14a, 36-41

Psalm 116.1-3, 10-end

1 Peter 1.17-23

Luke 24.13-35



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Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collects

Almighty God,
who hast given thine only Son to be unto
us both a sacrifice for sin,
and also an ensample of godly life: Give us grace
that we may always
most thankfully receive that his inestimable
benefit,
and also daily endeavour ourselves to follow the
blessed steps of his most holy life:
through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

INTRODUCTION

We do this not because everything is clear, but because Christ is alive.

Have you ever walked away from something you desperately hoped for only to realise it was right beside you all along? In Luke’s account of the Emmaus road, two heartbroken disciples flee Jerusalem after Jesus’ crucifixion. Their dreams shattered and hope buried, they journey in despair. Yet the risen Christ quietly joins them, unrecognised, walking alongside their questions and confusion.

A profound truth is that resurrection doesn’t always arrive with dramatic certainty; it often comes as gentle companionship during our darkest moments.

Through Scripture and the breaking of bread, these disciples’ hearts burn within them until their eyes finally open to see Jesus present all along.

The Easter season challenges us to recognise that Christ walks with us in our everyday moments – in prayer, around tables, and in acts of kindness to neighbours. We’re called to become people who show others new life not by holding resurrection as mere belief but by living it out in our daily relationships.

We are called not to let another day pass without opening your eyes to where Jesus is already walking beside you – in Scripture, in community, and in service to others.

Emmaus: Context and Meaning
(Gospel of Luke 24.13–35)

The road to Emmaus unfolds in the shadow of Passover, as the disciples struggle to understand Jesus’ death and the news of his resurrection. They had hoped for a Messiah who would restore Israel, yet Jesus reveals that his suffering and rising are the true fulfilment of God’s promises.

As he walks with them, Jesus opens the Scriptures, showing that this is not a break from Israel’s story, but its completion. Their doubt reflects the wider questions of their world, yet the risen Christ answers not with argument, but with presence—turning despair into hope.

In this moment, God’s covenant comes to fulfilment. The disciples’ eyes are opened, their faith awakened, and they return to the community to bear witness. Christ is made known among us—in the Scriptures, in the breaking of bread, and in one another.

As we walk lightly on sacred ground,
teach us Lord to make known your kingdom,
and let this reflect in all that we do and say.

On the Road to Recognition

Easter 3A – Luke 24:13–35 (with Acts 2; Psalm 116; 1 Peter 1)

Last week, we found ourselves with Thomas.
Honest. Direct. Wanting to see, touch, know.

And we heard those words of Jesus:
“Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

And so, we ended with that invitation:
And as Paula Gooder puts it so clearly:

“Believing in the resurrection can and should transform not only how we view the world, but how we live in it. We should become people in whom others can see new life.”

That was the invitation.
This week, as we continue our journey, the Gospel shows us what that looks like in practice.

Not in a locked room.
Not in a moment of dramatic proof.
But on a road.

Two disciples, walking away from Jerusalem.
Walking away from hope, really.
“We had hoped...”

You can hear it in their voices. That past tense.
“We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.”
Hope folded away with everything else that failed.
And as they walk, they talk.
They turn it over. What happened? What did it mean? What now?

And—this is the quiet mystery at the heart of the story—
Jesus comes alongside them.
And they do not recognise him.

Now that matters.
Because it tells us something strongly important about resurrection life.

It is entirely possible to be walking with the risen Christ
and not yet know it.

He is there:
in their questions,

in their confusion,
in their remembering,
in their searching.

Still, their eyes are kept from recognising him.
And perhaps that feels familiar.

There are seasons when we walk, and we wonder, and we pray, and we listen...
and still things are not clear. There are times when faith feels unsettled, when
hesitation and unknowing walk beside us. Even then, Christ walks with us quietly.
Our questions and confusion do not keep him away. This forms part of the journey
of faith—trusting that we are accompanied, even when we struggle to recognise
God’s presence.

Even then, things remain unclear.

Resurrection does not always arrive as certainty.
Sometimes, it arrives as companionship.
Christ walks with us before we understand.
But then comes the moment of turning.

Jesus begins to speak.
“Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things
about himself in all the Scriptures.”

He doesn’t reveal himself straight away.
He opens the Scriptures.
And later, they will say:

“Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road...?”
That’s the first sign of resurrection life in them.

Not sight.
But a burning heart.
Something stirs. Something awakens. Something comes alive.
They don’t yet see—but they are being changed.

And after that, awakening comes the table.

They reach Emmaus. The day is nearly over.
“Stay with us,” they say.
And at the table, in the most typical of actions—

taking bread,
blessing it,
breaking it,
giving it—

Their eyes are open.
And they recognise him.

And then—
He vanishes.

Which seems almost cruel, at first.
But perhaps it is the final gift.
Because now they no longer need to see him in front of them to know he is with them.

They have learned to recognise him:
in the Scriptures,
in the breaking of bread,
in the life they share.

And then, immediately, they turn around.
That same road they walked in sorrow, they now walk in hope.
Back to Jerusalem. Back to the others.
Because resurrection is never something we keep to ourselves.
It always turns us outward.

And you can feel how the other readings reflect this.

In Acts, Peter stands—not hiding anymore, not uncertain—but proclaiming:
“This Jesus... God has made both Lord and Messiah.”
The resurrection has moved from confusion... to conviction... to proclamation.

In the Psalm:
“I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.”
Resurrection as a way of walking.

And in 1 Peter:
“Set your hope... be holy... love one another deeply.”
Resurrection is taking shape in the texture of everyday life.

So as we ponder on this, what does it mean for us—to live inside the resurrection?

It means looking for hope in the ordinary. Listening when a friend needs to speak. Giving encouragement or patience when it would be easier to turn away. Christ is found within the quiet practice of prayer and in a moment of gratitude at the end of a long week. The hope of resurrection appears in sharing bread, making space at the table, and giving; these humble deeds become places where Christ walks with us, and resurrection takes root in our lives.

It may not always look like certainty.

Instead, it may look like this: Walking with one another, even when we don't yet understand.

Listening again to the Scriptures, waiting for something to burn within us.
Sometimes it is a word or phrase that remains. Sometimes it is the quiet company

of others, gathered around the story. Sometimes it is the slow work of prayer, or the mild wondering that opens our hearts. In these ways, we are made ready to recognise when new life stirs.

Gathering at the table, where Christ is made known among us.
And then we turn outward, carrying that life into the world. Welcoming the stranger. Getting in touch with a neighbour. Sharing a meal. Giving encouragement. In these modest acts, resurrection hope finds its way inside the fabric of our days.

Here, in this place—
by the lake, under wide skies, with all the ordinary rhythms of living around us—
we are not so far from that road to Emmaus.

We walk.
We wonder.
We gather.
We break bread.

And Christ meets us here.
Not always in immediately obvious ways.
But faithfully. Gently. Persistently.
Until, over time, we begin to recognise him.

So yes—
We don't merely hold faith in the resurrection.
We learn to recognise it.

In the opening of Scripture.
In the breaking of bread.
In the turning of our lives toward one another.

And as we do—
we become people in whom others can see new life.
People who walk in the land of the living.
People who carry hope not as an idea, but as a way of being.
Together.

For the sake of the world.
Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In Luke 24:13-35, the two disciples walking to Emmaus didn't recognize Jesus even though he was right there with them. Why do you think their eyes were kept from recognizing him, and what does this teach us about how God might be present in our lives?

- The disciples walked with Jesus but couldn't see who he was.

He suggests that 'it is entirely possible to be walking with the risen Christ and not yet know it' and that Christ is present 'in their questions, in their confusion, in their remembering, in their searching.'

- Think about a difficult time in your life when you felt confused or hopeless. Looking back now, can you see ways that God might have been walking alongside you even when you couldn't recognise His presence at the time?

The disciples said their hearts were 'burning within us' when Jesus explained the Scriptures to them on the road. What do you think this burning heart feeling represents, and how might we experience something similar today?

- This burning heart as 'the first sign of resurrection life in them' and explains that 'something stirs. Something awakens. Something comes alive.' He notes that they were being changed even before they could see clearly.
- When you read Scripture, pray, or worship, have you ever felt a sense of something stirring or awakening in your heart? What was that experience like, and how did it affect you?

Jesus was finally recognized when he broke bread with the disciples at the table. Why do you think sharing a meal together was the moment when their eyes were opened to see who he really was?

- Jesus revealed himself through 'the most typical of actions— taking bread, blessing it, breaking it, giving it.' He suggests that Christ is made known 'in the breaking of bread' and 'in the life they share.'
- How might sharing meals or other ordinary activities with others become opportunities to experience God's presence? What would it look like to approach these everyday moments with the expectation that Christ might meet us there?

After recognizing Jesus, the disciples immediately turned around and went back to Jerusalem to tell the others. Pastor Dennis says 'resurrection is never something we keep to ourselves.' What does this teach us about how faith should affect our relationships and actions?

- The sermon explains that 'resurrection always turns us outward' and that the disciples went from walking 'in sorrow' to walking 'in hope.' It we should become 'people in whom others can see new life.'
- In what practical ways can you 'turn outward' and share the hope you've found in Christ with others in your daily life? What would it look like for someone to see 'new life' in you?

This five-day devotional seeks to provide Room to Wonder about the nature of Resurrection and to explore the themes of accepting, questioning, resolving and entering into its fullness.



Day 1

Luke 24:13-35

The journey of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus highlights the mystery of faith and the realisation that Christ walks with us even when we do not recognise Him. Our walk of faith begins with trust and acknowledgement of His constant presence in our lives. Though our eyes may be kept from seeing Him, our hearts are open to transformation in His presence.

The unknown traveller who joins the disciples is a reminder that Jesus accompanies us in our questioning and confusion, offering companionship that leads us to new understanding and revelation at the table of our lives.

- When have you experienced God's presence even when you doubted it?
- How can you invite Jesus into your daily walk and conversations?
- What practices help you notice God's companionship in ordinary moments?
- Pray for greater awareness of God's presence in your daily routine.
- Ask for a heart open to see Jesus in unexpected places and encounters.

Day 2

Acts 2:1-4

The bold proclamation by Peter in Acts 2 is a beautiful example of how encountering the risen Christ inspires conviction and transformation. Moving from the uncertainty of the locked upper room to a public declaration of Jesus as Lord, Peter's journey echoes our own call to externalise our internal beliefs.

This courageous step of faith invites us to consider what the world sees in us. Are we people of hope and resurrection, empowering others to discover Christ in their lives, too? Let us continue to open new spaces within ourselves for God to work, refining our courage and faith.

- Reflect on a time you felt empowered to share your faith. What gave you that strength?
- How can you be a witness to Christ in your community today?
- What steps can you take to move from private faith to public expression?
- Ask God for courage to speak boldly about your faith.
- Pray for opportunities to demonstrate Christ's love in tangible ways.

Day 3 Psalm 116:1-9

In the psalmist's song, we find an expression of earnest faith and deep-rooted trust. The assurance of walking before the Lord in the land of the living demonstrates the promise of resurrection life that meets us in our everyday paths, reassuring us of God's enduring care.

In response to God's faithfulness, this theme encourages us to enter each day with gratitude and expectation of His presence. Can we recommit to living in His promise, allowing our footsteps to reflect the hope we carry within us?

- How does gratitude affect your awareness of God's presence?
- What does it mean to you to "walk before the Lord" in your daily life?
- How might you express your thankfulness to God today?
- Pray for an increasing awareness of God's presence in the ordinary.
- Seek God's guidance for living a life that speaks of His promises.

Day 4 1 Peter 1:3-9

This letter invites us into a living hope, not based on visible certainties, but grounded in a faith refined through trials. It is this faith that moulds us into people of endurance and love, ready to respond to God, each other, and the world.

Setting our hope on the future holds us firmly in the present, challenging us to nourish the relationships around us and express the love we have received. Each act of love sown today shapes tomorrow's harvest of grace.

- Consider a time when your faith was tested. What was its impact on you?
- How can you intentionally spread hope within your

community?

- What role does love play in sustaining your faith?
- Pray for resilience and steadfastness in your faith journey.
- Invite God to open your heart to love others more deeply.

Day 5 John 20:19-23

The risen Christ brings peace to His followers, reminding them of their mission to carry God's love into the world. As Christ breathes new life into them with the Holy Spirit, He sends them out to be His hands and feet in the world—a mandate that resonates with us today.

In responding to this call, we recognise that sharing the hope of resurrection isn't just about words but actions. By welcoming the stranger, breaking bread, and extending friendship, we bring the light of Christ to our communities and beyond.

- How do you experience Christ's peace in your life?
- What are some practical ways you can be a peacemaker in your circle?
- Reflect on how you can be more aware of the needs of those around you.
- Ask for God's peace to fill any areas of unrest in your heart.
- Pray for opportunities to serve others and demonstrate Christ's love.



End notes and further reading

End notes and further reading

Harrington, Daniel J Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Matthew

Moloney, Francis J, SBD, Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of John

Johnson, Luke Timothy: Sacra Pagina: The Gospel on Luke

Collins, Raymond F., Sacra Pagina: First Corinthians

Andrew McGowan substack.com/@abmcg

N.T. Wright, Twelve months of Sundays Year A

Andrew Pratt, pastor and hymn writer (theworshipcloud.com)

Paula Gooder: Paula Gooder, The Risen Existence: The Spirit of Easter (Fortress Press, 2015)

Let your faith and relationships
be shaped by love and patience
for God's love is
revealed in lives, not letters.

Brabarlung Totem

This is produced on
GunaiKurnai Country and
our respects are made to
the First Nations people
everywhere.



Prepared by Rev'd Dennis Webster, Rector of the Anglican Parish of Paynesville,
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