

# Journey to Easter



DailyLife  
Five Oaks Church

Week 7: March 26–April 1, 2016

# *Day 1*

*March 28*



WHEN YOUR HOPE is crushed . . .

Often what we hope for doesn't align with God's plans. In today's reading, Cleopas and his friend are dismayed along with all the other followers of Jesus who witnessed Jesus' death. One comments in verse 21, "We had hoped that he [Jesus] was the one to redeem Israel". Jesus does redeem Israel, and much more, but not as an earthly king leading Israel to greatness and power. As we often do, these disciples had the wrong vision. They were operating in the wrong reality.

The first and very important thing to notice is that Jesus comes alongside them, "a very present help in times of trouble." He indeed cares enough to seek us out. Secondly, he leads them into the Scriptures. The result is their vision aligns with God's, and their hope, faith, and joy are restored!



*Read | Luke 24:13–35*



*Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.*

Many of us have, at some time, felt that God has let us down. Yet the Scriptures say he is faithful. The root of our faith is the faithfulness of God. If or when you feel hopeless or dismayed, remember this: In the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the “paraclete,” literally meaning, “called to one’s side.” You may not sense him with your physical senses, but by God’s faithfulness, he is nonetheless there with you. As Jesus did with Cleopas and his friend, the Holy Spirit wants to come along side you. He is the one whom Jesus promised would guide us into all truth. As Jesus did with the pair on the road to Emmaus, how do you sense the Holy Spirit leading you into the Scriptures (where your vision will come into line with his, and as a result, your hope, faith and joy will be restored)?

# Day 2

March 29



## THE CONVINCING CHRIST . . .

At the end of yesterday's reading, Cleopas and his friend rush back to the disciples and began to fill them in on what had happened on the road to Emmaus. They find that Jesus also appeared to Simon Peter. In today's reading, suddenly Jesus appears before them all. Though the disciples had heard and likely believed the stories of Jesus' appearing, they were terrified, thinking they were seeing a ghost. According to the Scriptures, they are troubled and doubting, yet Jesus doesn't leave because of their doubt! You'll see he takes steps to convince them. First he tells them to touch him, then he shows them his scars, then he asks for something to eat to show them he is fully and physically alive, and then the final tool is Scripture. There is no scolding or reprimanding, but deliberate persuasion and a calling to reach others.



*Read | Luke 24:36–53*



*Reflect* | Read and reflect on the following.

What questions and doubts about the reality of Jesus and what he did for you do you have? Don't lose heart. Let Jesus see your concerns. You can expect the same gentle patience that he showed the disciples. This might manifest itself as you read the Scriptures, while talking to a Christian brother or sister, or through some other divine appointment. We have a very creative God in how he reaches out to us!

If you are firm in your faith, you could gather from this text just how you should respond to unbelievers and those who are doubting: in a gentle, convincing manner. We are called, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to convince people of the truth of the gospel!

# Day 3

March 30



A NEW AGE—“the already, not yet”

In the first chapter of Acts, Luke tells us about the final forty days that Jesus appeared to the disciples before his ascension. The disciples are still wondering about “restoring the kingdom to Israel,” not understanding the scope of what God intends to do. As you read, note that Jesus’ answer to them is somewhat sobering—basically, is it really any of their/our business? Jesus redirects their curiosity to what should be of importance to them: receiving power from the Holy Spirit and thereby becoming his witnesses. This starts right where they are, then to the far reaches of the earth. God’s influence in the world through his followers will take on a new dimension, gifting many—sons and daughters, servants, young and old, and anyone who calls on his name—with the Holy Spirit to accomplish his work.



*Read* | *Read: Acts 1:1–11*



*Reflect* / Read and reflect on the following.

Often God's people have focused on when exactly Jesus is coming back or on predicting the precise nature of the tribulation period. Some things aren't for us to know. Jesus will redirect us to the task at hand. If you are a believer, God has gifted you in specific ways to minister to other believers, and/or to make new disciples. What ways do you think God wants to work through you? The Scriptures encourage us to use the gifts God has given us to build up the body of Christ, the church. His gifts are many—and all from the same Spirit.

# *Day 4*

*March 31*



## THE BIRTH OF THE CHURCH

The outset of the church was dramatic and revolutionary in the hearts of the people. The walls of self-preservation and entanglement with self-dependence are miraculously gone. By the work of God, the way in which they behaved influenced new people to be saved daily.



*Read | Acts 2: 42–47*





*Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.*

Does God's church on earth today seem like a watered-down version of that first church? Think about your own interactions at church and small group, and perhaps other churches in the past. Imagine what you would like to see the church look like: perhaps the ability to forgive, giving people a second chance, being willing to give of your time and money, loving the unlovely, love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. How can you work with God to bring about the vision that he has? Make your own list and pray that God will work in your heart and the heart of his church in miraculous ways. With man it is impossible, but with God, all things are possible!

# Day 5

April 1



## A cup overflowing

Today you will read about a beggar, whose name we don't know (but God does), who was lame from his birth. He learned from his condition to expect few opportunities to arise for a better life, but perhaps just to get a few coins from the extra money of those who walked by—like a dog getting food from the table that people didn't want. Then suddenly and unexpectedly, the kingdom of God is poured out on him! He is blessed with far more than he expected! He goes from begging to walking and leaping and praising God. God seems to love to create joy where there had been suffering. This is a wonderful picture of how full life in God's kingdom is and will be.



*Read* / Acts 3:1–10



*Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.*

If you have been a Christian for some time, look back at why you came to Christ. What were you struggling with that moved you to turn to him? We all still have struggles, as I'm sure the beggar did after he was healed, but now count your blessings. Along with some promised suffering, reflect on what more you have gotten than you asked for. Thank God for how he has poured out his Kingdom on you!

If you haven't yet crossed the line of faith, you can expect much from God—we can't outgive him. We offer him our spent, meager lives, and he gives us the Kingdom! Looking back on our lives on earth as his people, we will be able to say, "It was good! My life wasn't wasted!"

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