**Seven Miles and One Loaf Later**

Small Group Discussion

Luke 24:13-35

**Warm-up questions and intro:**

* How do you feel about the Easter holiday? Do you have any Easter traditions that are especially meaningful to you?
* Today’s passage focuses on two disciples who are in utter despair, because their hopes for Jesus were crushed when he died. Have you ever had this experience of feeling like your hopes were crushed? If comfortable, share an example.
* Last week we studied the crucifixion of Jesus, and specifically the import of his words, “It is finished.” This week we resume on Sunday morning after his death on Friday, through the account of Luke.

**Read** Luke 24:1-12, to get a sense for the context. Discuss:

* Who were the first witnesses to the resurrection of Jesus?
* Why do you think the other disciples considered their account to be “nonsense?” (v. 11)
* Why is it so significant that the first witnesses to Jesus’ resurrection—according to every Gospel account—were women?
	+ Answer: One of the best reasons to believe that this resurrection account is true is because the first witnesses of the resurrection were women. In the first century culture, there was no gender equality of any kind. Women were not allowed to testify in a court of law because it was thought that they were not trustworthy witnesses. If you were Luke and you were making up a story about Jesus so that people would believe he was alive (when really he wasn’t), you would make it as believable as possible. You wouldn’t make a bunch of women the first witnesses of his resurrection unless it really happened that way.

**Read** Luke 24:13-24. Discuss:

* As you read this account, why do you think that these two disciples were unable to recognize Jesus? What are the possibilities?
* What strikes you about the question that Jesus asks in v. 17?
	+ What does this say about how Jesus welcomes your honest thoughts and questions about him?
* In the two men’s response to this question (vv. 19-24), what do we see about how the disciples viewed Jesus (prior to the Resurrection)?
* Pastor Josh said that in order for the trajectory of your life to change from despair to hope, **you have to recognize when Jesus is walking alongside you in your journey**. Discuss:
	+ How did Jesus take the initiative to reach into the lives of these two discouraged men?
	+ How have you experienced Jesus trying to get your attention, calling out to you?
	+ What things keep you from recognizing his voice or his presence in your life?

**Read** Luke 24:25-27. Discuss:

* What was the major difficulty that these two disciples were having with the death of Jesus? (Their definition of a Messiah didn’t have room for One who would suffer and die).
	+ What are some reasons that these men should have not been so surprised at Jesus’ death?
	+ What does Jesus do here to show them how his death (and resurrection) was necessary?
	+ What specific examples—Old Testament stories, laws, etc.—do you think Jesus might have “opened” during this journey?
* Pastor Josh said that for the trajectory of your life to change, **you have to let Jesus open the Scriptures for you**. In other words, you have to see the Bible through “Jesus glasses” (a phrase borrowed from Dr. Joel Gregory).
	+ If you have had the experience of coming to see all the Scriptures and all of life through the lenses of Jesus’ death and resurrection, what enabled you to see through that perspective?
	+ This principle is, in essence, what we have sought to do all throughout the “Big Story” series. How have you come to see the Bible and life differently as a result of this series? What difference has it made for you?
	+ If you were on the Road to Emmaus with Jesus, and he was “explaining…what was said in all the [Old Testament] Scriptures concerning himself,” what event or aspect would you especially want him to explain?

**Read** Luke 24:28-35. Discuss:

* What test was embedded in Jesus’ action in v. 28?
* At what point were these men able to recognize Jesus? What do you think brought about that recognition?
	+ All throughout the Gospel of Luke—including multiple times after the Resurrection—meals are an important occasion when Jesus reveals himself. Why do you think this is the case? Does it have any implications for our small groups or other ministries?
* Why did Jesus disappear after they recognized him? (V. 31. See also v. 36 for the answer).
* Why do you think their “hearts were burning within” them on the road?
	+ Have you ever experienced this spiritual “burning heart?” What brought it about for you?
* Pastor Josh said that for the trajectory of your life to change, you have to **invite Jesus in to eat with you**. Clearly, the meaning of “eat” is symbolic here. What does this mean? (See also Revelation 3:20 for help).
* What evidence do you see in vv. 33-35 that the trajectory of these two lives was changed? What did their post-resurrection life include?
* Have you experienced the change of trajectory that we’ve discussed today—from despairing to hope-filled, purposeful, and exuberant?
	+ If so, what has that change been like?
	+ If not, what do you think is keeping you from that change?
	+ How is it possible to experience this change of trajectory even in the midst of ongoing, difficult circumstances?

**Sharing/Prayer**

* As always, take some time to share areas where you need people to pray for you. Spend time praying for one another.
* Pray for this Thursday’s Alpha kickoff, and for the people who will have the opportunity to recognize Jesus and invite him in.