

A Single Session from *Resurrection*

# BROKEN BREAD, OPEN EYES

LUKE 24:13-35



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A LifeGuide®



Bible Study

# Broken Bread, Open Eyes

*Luke 24:13-35*

When I was a college student living thousands of miles from home, I would often become anxious and lonely when certain major holidays approached and I was faced yet again with the prospect of not being able to celebrate with my family. But then something quite remarkable would happen—various friends and professors would notice my predicament and take pity on me. They would invite me into their homes and give me a place at their dinner tables. Though I would walk through the door a total stranger to many who were gathered, something wonderful would happen as thanksgiving was offered, dishes were passed and the feasting began. Somehow by the end of the meal I would feel known, loved and accepted as part of the family—even if just for that one occasion. Meals shared in a spirit of love and friendship would often transform my holiday sadness into great laughter and joy. In this study we'll see how the risen Lord transformed a similar occasion.

**GROUP DISCUSSION.** What is one of your most memorable meals with friends or family?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** How have shared meals opened up new relationships or deepened existing relationships in your life?

On the day Jesus rose from the dead, two disheartened followers set out from Jerusalem to return to their home in Emmaus. Let's explore their encounter with the "stranger" along the way and see how it transformed their lives. *Read Luke 24:13-35.*

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**1.** What mix of emotions might the two followers have been feeling as they began to make their way back to Emmaus?

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**2.** How did the two followers initially respond to Jesus when he "came up and walked along with them" on the road (vv. 15-18)?

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**3.** What might have kept them from understanding his true identity?

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**4.** What keeps you from recognizing the presence of Jesus walking along the road with you in your life?

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**5.** Verse 27 tells us that "beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself." Why was it important for Jesus to explain from the Hebrew Scriptures his identity and all that had happened in recent days?

**6.** How does studying the Scriptures help prepare you to recognize the presence of Jesus in your life and in the world around you?

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**7.** What does Jesus do after he sits down at the table with the two followers (v. 30)?

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**8.** Why do you think their eyes are opened at this particular moment (v. 31)?

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**9.** How does the risen Jesus still make himself known to us in the breaking of bread and sharing of meals?

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**10.** Why is it significant that the two recall feeling as though their hearts were “burning” within them as they walked along the road with Jesus (v. 32)?

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**11.** What did the two followers do when they returned to Jerusalem (v. 35)?

**12.** How might you help others recognize the presence of the risen Lord and invite them to share in all that he offers them?

*Give thanks to God for walking with you in the midst of your particular struggles and revealing himself to you as the risen Lord. Pray that you might know him more deeply as you feast with him and are transformed by his presence, and that you might joyfully invite others to know him too.*

#### **Now or Later**

Genesis 3:6-7 speaks of another incident where two people shared a meal and had their eyes opened. Scholars have suggested that Luke 24:30-31 is intended as a reversal of what happened in the Genesis 3 story. Read Genesis 3:1-19 and reflect on the “meal” described there and its consequences for humankind. Who offered Adam and Eve the food? What did they “know” or “recognize” once they ate of it? What impact did this have for them and all their future descendants? Then, by way of comparison, look again at Luke 24. Who offered the food? What did they “recognize”? What was the long-term impact? Spend some time reflecting on the ways the resurrection of Jesus reverses the fall of the first human couple and what that means for your life as a follower of the risen One.

# Leader's Notes

## **Broken Bread, Open Eyes. Luke 24:13-35.**

*Purpose:* To learn to look for the risen Lord to make himself known in the breaking of bread.

**Question 2.** The two followers totally miss the fact that *Jesus* is with them. They take him for a mere stranger—and a completely clueless one at that! They couldn't have been more wrong.

**Question 3.** Participants may begin to speculate about the nature of Jesus' resurrection body and wonder if the disciples didn't recognize him because he looked so different. While this is possible, perhaps the real point is that these two heartbroken people did not have eyes to see Jesus walking right next to them. To them, he was gone. They were blinded by their grief, disappointment and failure to understand God's redemptive purposes.

**Question 4.** Many of us are able to sympathize with these two. Weighed down by the cares, fears and disappointments of our lives and the world around us, our eyes grow dim and we lose focus. We stop expecting God to be there, so we stop looking for him. Encourage participants to name specific worries or fears (related to family, finances, health, etc.) and articulate how these prevent them from seeing the risen Lord walking alongside them.

**Question 5.** While we don't know much about these two followers, it's likely that they were faithful Jewish believers, looking and longing for their God to come through on his promises to Israel. Their hope was in the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament), but they needed help understanding how these Scriptures had always pointed toward events happening right before their eyes in Jesus' life, death, resurrection and exaltation.

**Question 6.** Encourage concrete examples here. Perhaps, for instance, someone read Psalm 19:1 ("the heavens declare the glory of God") and then was amazed when she looked up and noticed how the mountains just outside her window so clearly testify to God's greatness.

**Questions 7-8.** What's particularly interesting here is that Jesus, the guest, suddenly assumes the role of the host. He takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it

and gives it. Notice the similarities between this language and Luke's depiction of the Lord's Supper in Luke 22:19. Because in sharing bread Jesus essentially shares *himself*, this is the moment when they recognize him.

**Question 9.** This question tries to get at the heart of what this passage has to teach us about the resurrection. The ultimate response, of course, is that Jesus meets us this way when the Christian community gathers to celebrate the Lord's Supper. But there are other ways too. Table fellowship is a major theme in Luke's Gospel: Jesus is always eating with people! Perhaps as we share meals—extending and receiving hospitality—with friends and enemies alike, we will find our own eyes opened to the presence of the risen Lord in our midst.

**Question 10.** As the two followers reflected on their experience with Jesus that day, they were probably astounded that they hadn't put it together. Of course that was Jesus walking with them! He had been there all along. This highlights what Fred Craddock calls the “central role of memory in faith and understanding”—often we don't understand what's happening as it's happening, but once our eyes have been opened we are able to see into our past and interpret more accurately what was happening (see Fred B. Craddock, *Luke, Interpretation* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1990]).

**Now or Later.** Luke 24:31-32 may be understood as a reversal—as the ultimate “undoing”—of what happened when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit. N. T. Wright is particularly helpful on this point:

The first meal mentioned in the Bible is the moment when Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit. The direct result is new and unwelcome knowledge: “the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.” . . . Now this other couple . . . are at table, and are confronted with new and deeply welcome knowledge: “their eyes were opened and they recognized him.” . . . This, Luke is saying, is the ultimate redemption; this is the meal which signifies that the long exile of the human race, not just of Israel, is now over at last. (N. T. Wright, *Resurrection of the Son of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003], p. 652)

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