

**Text: Luke 24:13-32**

**Title: “Easter’s Answers”**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**ILLUSTRATION** – With Hurricane Katrina bearing down on the Gulf Coast last summer, a guy by the name of Chris Moretz did what many others thought was a wise thing to do ... ride out the hurricane in their home. Now he doesn’t think it was such a good idea. The fury of the storm left him trapped in his house in Waveland, Mississippi. Water poured in, going from ankle deep to hip deep in five minutes. Before long Chris found himself swimming for his life. After finding refuge, Moretz painted a message on the roof of his house to let his family he was OK. He painted his note on the roof of a splintered and submerged home. The message read, "C. Moretz is alive. Pass it on."

The message of Easter is that after the horrific storm of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, there’s good news. Jesus Christ is alive. Pass it on. That’s what we’re here to do. In Luke 24 we have a fascinating story of couple of dejected people who hadn’t got the message that Jesus was alive. Let’s pick up reading in v.13. **Read vv.13-15.**

Here are two of Jesus’ disciples who are walking along the road out of Jerusalem after the events of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. It was Sunday, and as far as they knew, Jesus was dead. One of them, according to v.18, is named Cleopas. His companion is not named, but many believe that it is his wife, and together they’re going home.

**Luke 24:14 - They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.**

This included all the events that occurred after Jesus was arrested ... the trials and tribunals before Caiaphas, Herod and Pilate. The horrific treatment by the soldiers as Jesus ultimately carried his Cross to Calvary where He was crucified between two criminals. And so far as they knew, that was the end of the story.

And their lives were filled with all kinds of questions ... and the answers weren’t coming easily. But the answers were closer than either of them knew. For the risen Savior, Jesus Christ, came and walked with them and talked with them ... and gave them Easter’s answers.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ of answers some of the greatest dilemmas we face in life.

### **1. EASTER ANSWERS OUR DESPAIR (v.17).**

**ON-SCREEN ILLUSTRATION** – Did you happen to see the Time magazine cover just a few weeks ago? It read “Be worried. Be *very* worried.” Now the cover story happened to be about global warming. But it could have been about just about anything you could imagine ... the battle against terrorism ... the price of gasoline ... the decline of the family ... whatever. There’s plenty to cause us to worry and to experience despair.

Jesus, still unrecognized by the two travelers, asked them...

**Luke 24:17 – “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast.**

Now Jesus asked the question, but it wasn't because He didn't know what they were discussing among themselves. He knew exactly what they were talking about. But he wanted to challenge them at the point of their discussion.

All they could do was to stand there with the faces downcast. Jesus had an answer for their despair, but there was something else...

## **2. EASTER ANSWERS OUR DISAPPOINTMENTS (vv.18-24).**

These two people had the marks of disappointment all over them. They stood still, paralyzed, and looking downcast. Then their disappointment begins to pour out of their mouths in vv.18-24.

“Sir, don't you know what has happened. Jesus of Nazareth was a powerful preacher and prophet. But the Jewish leaders had him crucified.

You really see the disappointment coming out in ...

### **Luke 24:21 – “But we had hoped that ...”**

Do you see it? All their hopes were in the past. Their hopes had been dashed against the rocks of disappointment.

They went on to explain that there were reports that the tomb was empty, but no one had seen Jesus.

### **Luke 24:21 – “But we had hoped that ...”**

Question: How would you fill in that blank? What disappointment in life has left you hanging? I had hoped that ... my health would improve ... I'd get that job promotion ... a relationship would strengthen ... that God would work a miracle in my marriage.

Life is filled with disappointments. We may feel disappointed...

- **In others**

**ILLUSTRATION** – Did you hear the incredible story of what happened to little 5-year-old Robert Turner last year up in Michigan? His mother collapsed on the floor and the little guy knew enough to call 9-1-1. But when the operator answered his call, Robert told her what happened to his mother, but the operator asked to speak with an adult. The boy hung up. When he called back about three hours later, he repeated that his mother had passed out. Another operator said: "You shouldn't be playing on the phone." Later she said: "Now put her on the phone before I send the police out there to knock on the door and you gonna be in trouble." Police eventually arrived at the house after the second call, but Turner already was dead. An ambulance never came.

Now our emergency responders get it right most of the time. But even they make mistakes. People will disappoint us and let us down. But we can also feel disappointed ...

- **In ourselves**

**ILLUSTRATION** – Those of you who are baseball fans know that Lou Gehrig was one of the greatest players in baseball history. He was known as the “ironman of baseball.” It was rare that Lou Gehrig ever struck out. He had such a keen eye that he could always get his bat on the ball. In one game, however, that was not the case. Lou and his New York Yankees were close to clinching the pennant. It was a very close game, in the ninth inning, they were one run down and bases were loaded (what else?). Two outs, typical big inning and Lou Gehrig was up to bat. When Lou stepped up to the plate the crowd went wild. The commentator said, “The best man in baseball is up to bat.” People settled down and Lou dug in. The pitcher wound up and delivered the first pitch. Lou looked at it, let go by, a never flinching, never blinking. STRIKE ONE, the umpire cried. The crowd erupted again. “Come on Lou!” Lou squared himself in the batter’s box again, the pitcher wound up and let the ball fly and it whizzed right by Lou again. He never moved his bat. STRIKE TWO. Now it was getting tense. Lou knocked the dirt from his cleats, dug into the earth, licked his lips, and raised his bat over his shoulder. Everybody knew that no matter what that pitcher threw Lou was going to get a piece of it. Again the pitcher wound up and let go. STRIKE THREE, YOU’RE OUT.

In stunned silence Lou Gehrig did something he never ever did. He turned and said something to the umpire, then walked back to the dugout. A newspaper reporter sensed this would be a great story. What did Lou Gehrig say to the umpire? The reporter tracked down Gehrig after the game and asked him the question: “What did you say to the ump?” Gehrig paused a minute then replied, “I said, ‘I’d give \$10,000 to have that pitch again.’”

We all can look back on experiences along the way in life where we would like to replay that day or that hour. But guess what. We can’t. And we feel disappointed in ourselves. And we can even feel disappointed ...

- **In God**

People are often disappointed with God when he doesn’t do things on our timetable. These two travelers in Luke 24 felt that way.

**Luke 24:21 - 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.**

God doesn’t always move on our schedule. He doesn’t always perform the way we want Him to perform. And many times, we are disappointed in life because we think God let us down.

Interestingly, the answer was right before their eyes, and the reason they didn’t see is that their hearts were filled with doubts, but ...

### **3. EASTER ANSWERS OUR DOUBTS (v.25).**

**Luke 24:25 - He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!**

They were “slow of heart to believe.” In other words, they couldn’t put all the pieces together. They knew the basic details. Jesus had been crucified before their very eyes. And then came the reports from early that very morning that some of the women had gone to the tomb and found it empty. There were even angels announcing that He was alive. But Jesus was nowhere to be found. And their minds were filled with doubts ... about Jesus and all that He told them would happen.

Interesting! They remembered all the things that Jesus did and said, except what he said about his resurrection. And now Jesus was right there before their eyes, and they couldn’t recognize him.

Disappointments do that to us. We can’t connect the dots.

**ILLUSTRATION** – Dan Brown, in his outrageously popular book, *The Da Vinci Code*, has Leigh Teabing, one of the main characters in the story say, “Almost everything our fathers taught us about Christ is false.”

Maybe you read the book and it caused you to have some real questions, even about some of the things that I have preached this morning. Well, I want to invite you to sit on a series of messages that I’m beginning next Sunday entitled “Cracking the Da Vinci Code ... Separating the Fact from the Fiction.” With the movie version starring Tom Hanks set to hit the theaters in about a month, millions will be exposed to Dan Brown’s effort to convince us that the account of Jesus’ death and resurrection are all false ... and worse ... there’s been a conspiracy by the church to keep the real truth from being known. Even if you’re not planning to see the movie, you’ll benefit from this teaching.

**The answers are there, but how do we get them?**

**Well, from our two travelers we see that the answers are found...**

- **In God’s plans (v.26)**

**Luke 24:26 - Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?”**

Note: Jesus explained that the Christ had to suffer before he entered into His glory. That’s the way it is. Suffering, letdowns, disappointments are part of this life, but they give way to something better in Christ.

It was true for Christ. God had a plan for Christ, even through the horrific events of the Cross. The prophets hundred of years before predicted it would happen.

It’s what had to happen if sinners such as you and I were to be saved? The cross was not defeat ... the cross was victory. The cross was not tragedy ... the cross was triumph. The cross was not the end ... the cross was the beginning. And had there been no rugged cross there would be no empty tomb. The cross was necessary in the plan of God.

And God has plans for your life. His plan may suffering ... failure ... changes of direction. But always remember God always works according to His plans.

The answers are found in God’s plans, but also ...

- **In God's promises**

**ILLUSTRATION** – You know today a lot of people get their workouts on climbing walls. You've seen them ... fabricated cliffs that people can scale, and get a good workout. Now climbing the sheer face of a cliff would be impossible, except that there are little outcroppings scattered across the face of the cliff designed to give you place to grab with your hands, and stand on with your feet as you climb the wall.

Well God's promises are like those outcroppings on the climbing wall. Life would be impossible to live if we didn't have those promises to grab hold of and to stand on as we're making our way.

Well Jesus did that for our two travelers.

**Luke 24:27 - And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.**

Friend, the answers are found in the promises God has left us in His Word, the Bible. These promises tell you that God has not left you, that you are not alone. They reassure you that God cares for you, that He is with you. God will never abandon you. Jesus is alive and there is hope. You don't have to give up!

Easter's answers are found in God's plans, God's promises, and ...

- **In God's presence (vv.28-32)**

Well, our two travelers finally arrive at Emmaus, their hometown. Jesus has walked with them along the way, and they still have not recognized him. Jesus would have moved on, the Bible says in ...

**Luke 24:29 - But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.**

They invited Jesus into their home, and they shared a meal. But Jesus quickly moved from being the guest, to being the host. For it is Jesus who takes the break, and breaks the bread and gives thanks, and hands it to them.

And in that instant their eyes were opened, and they recognized Jesus for who He was.

Listen, friend, God is closer than you think. Jesus was there with them, and they didn't recognize Him. When did they recognize Jesus? It was after they invited Him in to their homes, and into their lives. They opened their home and their hearts to Jesus.

And looking back, they could see it.

**Luke 24:32 - 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?”**

## **CONCLUSION**

That day for these two weary travelers that road of despair, disappointments and doubts, was changed to a road of joy, hope and faith ... all because of personal encounter with Jesus Christ.

**ILLUSTRATION** – Carrie Underwood became a household name last year when she won the American Idol singing competition. She’s a Baptist girl from Oklahoma who sings in her church choir, or at least she did before she became famous. Her latest album has won all kinds of awards but the song that has soared up the charts is a song entitled “Jesus Take the Wheel.” The song begins telling about a young woman who is driving on a wintry Christmas Eve night with her baby daughter in the back seat. The lyrics tell us the story...

Fifty miles to go and she was running low on faith and gasoline  
It been a long hard year  
She had a lot on her mind and she didn't pay attention  
She was going way to fast  
Before she knew it she was spinning on a thin black sheet of glass  
She saw both their lives flash before her eyes  
She didn't even have time to cry  
She was so scared  
She threw her hands up in the air

Jesus take the wheel  
Take it from my hands  
Cause I can't do this on my own  
I'm letting go  
So give me one more chance  
To save me from this road I'm on  
Jesus take the wheel

It was still getting colder when she made it to the shoulder  
And the car came to a stop  
She cried when she saw that baby in the backseat sleeping like a rock  
And for the first time in a long time  
She bowed her head to pray  
She said I'm sorry for the way  
I've been living my life  
I know I've got to change  
So from now on tonight ...

Jesus take the wheel  
Take it from my hands  
Cause I can't do this on my own

Oh, I'm letting go  
So give me one more chance  
Save me from this road I'm on  
Jesus take the wheel