

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

This Bible study is suitable as a special session for use during the celebration of Easter. Also, it is ideal to use anytime during the year to conclude the series of studies on the parables as told by Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.

Knowing the Resurrected Jesus
Luke 24:13-35

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the “Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study”. That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session “Background” located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day’s study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

The reading for the Gathering Time is Philippians 2:5-11. It is to be read by four readers and these readers will need to be asked ahead of time to read and given the copy of the reading in order to practice. Emphasize that they will need to read with dramatic emphasis. Use children and youth as appropriate. Make four copies of the reading from the final page of this session.

Bible Study Leader:

Have someone read the complete scripture passage Luke 24:13-35. Since this is a long passage, choose a reader who will read with enthusiasm. You may want to ask someone ahead of time to be prepared to read.

Worship Time Leader:

The Gathering Time reading of Philippians 2:5-11 would be appropriately used to close today's Worship Time. Make sure that the Gathering Time leader or you have made and distributed the copies of the reading (from the final page of this session).

Music Sources:

Some of the traditional songs sung on Easter Sunday may be difficult for a small group to sing. Choose from this list or other songs which emphasize the resurrection.

He is Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #277; CCLI#5178348

Christ Arose, *The Worship Hymnal* #273; CCLI#27783, Public Domain

He Lives, *The Worship Hymnal* #269; CCLI#17597

The Risen Christ, *The Worship Hymnal* #268; CCLI#4109978

Alleluia, Alleluia, *The Worship Hymnal* #272

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Knowing the Resurrected Jesus

Focal Text

Luke 24:13-35

Background Text

Luke 24:1-53

Main Idea

Knowing the resurrected Jesus encourages us to want to make him known to others.

Question to Explore

How can we more readily experience and share the good news about Jesus?

Teaching Aim

To lead your church to identify ways they can experience and share the good news of the resurrected Jesus.

Gathering together:

He is Lord, *The Worship Hymnal* #277; CCLI#5178348 (This song is based on Philippians 2:10-11 which is part of the reading which is to follow)

First thoughts:

Note to the leader of the Gathering Time for today:

This dramatic reading involves four readers. They need to be enlisted ahead of time and practice reading dramatically. The reading sets the stage for the study and worship of the morning.

Be sure to have copies of the reading for each of the readers. Make the copies from the reading as found on the final page of this session.

First reader:

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Knowing the Resurrected Jesus – 10-30-14-en

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Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Second reader:

***Who being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.***

First reader:

And being found in appearance as a man,

Third reader:

***he humbled himself
and became obedient to death –***

Fourth reader:

even death on a cross!

Third reader:

***Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,***

Fourth reader:

***that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,***

First reader:

***and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)***

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Knowing the Resurrected Jesus

Focal Text

Luke 24:13-35

Background Text

Luke 24:1-53

Main Idea

Knowing the resurrected Jesus encourages us to want to make him known to others.

Question to Explore

How can we more readily experience and share the good news about Jesus?

Teaching Aim

To lead your church to identify ways they can experience and share the good news of the resurrected Jesus.

Introduction to your personal study:

Read the resurrection stories found in Matthew 28:1-28; Mark 16:1-14; and John 20:30. You will note that some give information which others do not. Luke was not one of the disciples and, as far as we know from scripture, was not present at the events recorded. His story is one given to him by others and made real to him by the presence of the Holy Spirit in his life. Mark was not one of the 12 apostles, either.

The same comments just made of Luke’s writing would apply to Mark. Paul speaks of Mark’s Christian heritage and allows for the possibility that Mark could have been a young witness to some or many of the events involving the crucifixion and resurrection. Historians indicate that Mark may have been the first telling of the story. John’s writing may have been the last of the four Gospels to have been written.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Luke does not try to describe or explain the resurrection. He gives an account of two people walking along the road on the third day after the crucifixion. They are trying to make sense of all that has happened. They are bitterly disappointed that Jesus died and that He did not fulfill the hopes which they had for him to become ruler and to rid the Jews of Roman rule.

As is so often true in Luke’s stories and parables, there are three characters.

One is named Cleopas, meaning “renowned father”, and is a Greek name. The Semitic form is Clopas. In John 19:25, we are told “***Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.***” This could definitely be the man in the account in Luke 24:13-35. As well, Luke was a non-Jew who converted to Judaism. Likely then, he would have naturally used the Greek form of the name (Cleopas) rather than the Jewish form (Clopas) in the writing of the story.

The other person is not identified though it is generally assumed to be a man. However, it would be reasonable to assume that if the man involved is Clopas and the other person was his wife who had been with Mary, the mother of Jesus at the cross (John 19:25) that the two of them were journeying to their home in the village of Emmaus. Joseph also had a brother named Clopas so that would be another possibility for one of these travelers.

Their grief was the grief of close friends. This woman also watched the crucifixion and the agony of that day would be still too fresh to be endured.

The third person is identified as Jesus who came and walked alongside the two travellers but was not recognized by them.

The town to which they journeyed was not far from Jerusalem. The name Emmaus may be derived from the Hebrew word Hammat, “hot spring”. Luke places it about 60 stadia or seven miles from Jerusalem.

The town referred to may be one of three:

El-Quebibeh is seven miles northwest of Jerusalem, the site where Crusaders discovered a fort (1099) called Castellum Emmanus and built a church there. Archaeologists have found a First Century village on the site though there is no evidence that the name Emmaus was used of this site in the First Century.

Qaloniye (Colonia) was the site of a military colony of Vespasian which Josephus (a well-known historian of New Testament times) mentions as Ammaous. It is about 4 miles west of Jerusalem.

Amwas (Nicomopolis) is about 19 miles northwest of Jerusalem on the road to Joppa, famous for a spring with reputed healing qualities. Other historians and early church leaders (Jerome and Eusebius) accepted this site as the Luke's Emmaus. One ancient manuscript of the New Testament reads "160 stadia" instead of "60 stadia". See:

http://www.jesuswalk.com/lessons/24_13-35.htm

"Appearance of the Road to Emmaus" by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson, study #109. You may need to copy this "link" into your browser for it to open, rather than directly attempting to access it from this paragraph.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. (Luke 24: 13-16)

"That same day" refers to Luke 24:1 which says ***"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning."*** Jesus was crucified on Friday and was taken down from the cross, wrapped in linen cloth and placed in a tomb owned by a man named Joseph. ***"It was preparation day and the Sabbath was about to begin"*** (Luke 23:54). The following day was the Sabbath. ***"The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment"*** (Luke 23:55-56).

This, then, is the day following the Sabbath and the women had gone to anoint the body of Jesus, but instead saw two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning who said to them ***"Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen."*** When the women returned from the tomb, they told of their experience ***"to the Eleven and to all the others"*** (verse 9).

In verse 13 it says that ***"two of them were going to a village called Emmaus"***. This would indicate that these two were part of the group to whom the women told of their visit to the empty tomb.

They were talking about everything that happened. They must have recalled all of the events of the last week – Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem; his betrayal by Judas; his trial and crucifixion. They undoubtedly recalled happier times – the healing of people and other miracles. They talked about their hope that Jesus was the Messiah –

the one who would bring relief from their suffering as Jews under the Roman rule. Grief in its most raw form was present along with disappointment and disillusionment. Their disappointment in Jesus waged war with their commitment to him as a loving, just, and Godly being. What had all of it meant and what were they to do now that their hopes and dreams were dashed?

They may have walked slowly as they talked – both from anguish and from physical exhaustion of the previous days. They were oblivious to things around them and Jesus, who was walking in the same direction, joined them apparently with them hardly noticing his arrival.

Then he asked ***“What are you discussing together as you walk along?”***

The question made them stand still with their faces downcast. Then Cleopas reacted by asking if he were a visitor to Jerusalem and unaware of what was happening in the Jewish world. Their own world had been so wrapped up in these events that they could hardly imagine that someone was ignorant of them.

What things? he asked.

About Jesus of Nazareth, they replied. ‘He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and the crucified him, 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 of this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning, but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see’ (Luke 24: 19-24).

Jesus obviously asked the question, “What things?” only to give an opportunity to Cleopas and his companion to express their perception of what had happened. He would have particularly have wanted to hear their version of the resurrection story.

Cleopas clearly summarized the beliefs held about Jesus – he was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people and it has hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.

Imagine how difficult it would be to have come to this understanding of who Jesus – a carpenter from Nazareth – was. This was a belief that had come from observing, listening to, and following along after Jesus for some time. It probably came slowly and now it was crushed quickly and seemingly irrevocably.

Jesus now speaks. ***“He said to them, ‘How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the***

Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself“ (verses 25-27).

What a Bible Study that must have been. Yet it was one He had been teaching his disciples all along. Just as their eyes were not able to see who Jesus was even as He walked alongside them, they had been unable to hear the message Jesus was teaching throughout his entire ministry.

Some of the passages may have been Psalm 2: 1-2, 7; 16: 8-11; 110:1; 118:22; Isaiah 53: 3-12; 55:3 and Amos 9:11-12. These would have been passages familiar to Jewish people; they were read in the Synagogue each week; they were talked about in the family Sabbath meal. They expressed the hope of Israel – a Messiah would come.

But even the disciples and those closest to Jesus missed the reality of the fact that the Christ would have to suffer and then enter his glory. The phrase “enter into his glory” refers to the glory of the exalted Messiah. Passages which refer to this can be found in Luke 9:26; 21:27; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 Peter 1:11, 18-19, 21.

As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. 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.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him and he disappeared from their sight (Luke 24:28-31).

Even though Jesus had rebuked them for their foolishness and their slowness to believe the message of the Prophets, the two travelers did not want him to go when they arrived at the village to which they were going. They invited him to stay with them since it was nearly evening.

At the meal, Jesus as given the bread and asked to bless it as would be appropriate for a guest. He gave thanks for the bread and broke it and began to serve them. At that moment they recognized him.

What caused the recognition? Undoubtedly, Jesus had closed their ability to recognize him so that he could teach them on the way as well as listen to their perceptions of what had happened at the crucifixion and later at the resurrection. Was he disappointed to learn that the women’s story of the empty tomb was not understood by these who should have expected this very thing?

In the act of giving thanks for the bread, breaking the bread and serving it, Jesus allowed them to recognize him. These ordinary tasks they may have shared with him on other occasions. At any rate, they recognized him. But he was gone.

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?” (verse 32).

Suddenly they realized that they had known all along that this was Jesus, the Messiah. Their hearts had burned within them as he talked. The Scriptures had deep meaning. They were no longer just familiar teachings; they were the bread of life itself and were thus connected to the breaking of bread during which they recognized Jesus.

How do we explain that mystery of understanding the salvation story which comes to those who believe? We are unable to believe; unable to see Jesus even though He walks along beside us and teaches us in multiple ways of his goodness and his purpose for our lives. Then suddenly, we believe. Our eyes are opened; the things which seemed so dim before are now clear.

What did these two tired travelers do?

They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together, and saying, “It is true! The Lord is risen and has appeared to Simon”. Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread (verses 33-35).

By the time they returned to Jerusalem, the group had come to believe that the Lord was risen. He had appeared to Simon. Luke records in Chapter 24:12 that ***“Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.”***

John tells of Mary Magdalene going to the tomb and seeing that the stone had been rolled away came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple who would have been John. Peter and John returned to the tomb. John ran faster and looked inside the tomb and saw the strips of linen. Simon Peter went into the tomb and saw the strips of linen lying there as well as the burial cloth folded up by itself. Finally, John went inside and believed. (See John 20: 1-9).

There is no record, however, of Jesus actually appearing to Simon (whom we assume to be Peter) until Luke records it in chapter 24, verse 34. The two return from Emmaus to add their testimony and then Jesus appears to the gathered group of disciples.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

This story reminds us that Jesus is real and his resurrection is real. If you are using it at Easter time, emphasize that this is key to the Christian faith.

Two key emphases which Jesus made to the disciples on the Emmaus road are:

1. The Christ would have to suffer death, and then

2. Enter into his glory.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Knowing the Resurrected Jesus

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the **Focal Text** in their Bibles. Also, share with them the **Main Idea** to be learned from the Scriptures, and the **Questions to be Explored** by the group.

Focal Text

Luke 24:13-35

Background Text

Luke 24:1-53

Main Idea

Knowing the resurrected Jesus encourages us to want to make him known to others.

Question to Explore

How can we more readily experience and share the good news about Jesus?

Teaching Aim

To lead your church to identify ways they can experience and share the good news of the resurrected Jesus.

Connect with Life:

Note to the Bible Study Leader to consider during the week before leading this study:

Mandy Thursday and Good Friday services help one prepare for Easter Sunday by focusing on the time in the garden of Gethsemane; the trial and the crucifixion. Today's story of the appearance of Jesus to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus can only be understood if we have some understanding of the pain and suffering they had experienced. Read the Biblical account of those days. You may want to gather members of your home church on Thursday evening or on Good Friday to share

together these passages. It may be a good time for the church to take The Lord's Supper as a remembrance.

Guide the Study:

Have someone read the complete scripture passage Luke 24:13-35. **Since this is a long passage, choose a reader who will read with enthusiasm. You may want to ask someone ahead of time to be prepared to read.**

Briefly summarize Luke 24:1-12 for the group. You will be reading parts of this scripture during the study.

Describe the three characters involved in this story using the background material.

Say: Emmaus was described by Luke as being 60 stadia or seven miles from Jerusalem. The town no longer exists although possible sites have been identified. Those are described in the leader preparation materials for today if anyone is interested.

Have someone read Luke 24:13-16.

Ask "When is this event happening?" (On the third day after the crucifixion – the same day the women went to the tomb and found it empty). Have someone read Luke 24:1-7 and Matthew 28: 1-10.

Encourage the group to dialog on this: Who might these two people travelling to Emmaus be? (Remind the class that verse 13 identifies them as part of the group gathered together in Luke 24:9-11.) From the background material discuss who Cleopas was and who the other traveller might be.

Ask: What would be the topic of their discussion? (All of the events of the last week – the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the betrayal, the trial, the crucifixion, their lack of understanding of how this could have happened when they thought Jesus was to be the Messiah and save them from Roman rule)

Now ask: Do you think they were walking quickly? (Probably not. They were talking things over; they were physically exhausted from the last days; Jesus had no trouble catching up with them)

Solicit opinions on this: Why were they surprised that Jesus did not know about the events happening in Jerusalem?

Ask the group to suggest a similar, current, newsworthy event that everyone would be talking about in recent days.

Inquire: Why did Jesus ask them what they were talking about? (He wanted to hear their perception of the events)

Encourage an answer to: How did Jesus respond? Read verses 25-27. (He told them they were foolish and slow of heart to believe what the prophets had been saying.)

Tell them: Now lets look for a moment at why Jesus would say such a harsh-sounding thing to these two people.

Have someone read Isaiah 53:3-12; and 55:3. Comment that these were Scriptures that these Jewish people would have heard read in the Synagogue and in their homes.

Emphasize that Jesus said that the Christ had to suffer and then enter into his glory. Why was that so hard for the disciples to understand?

Ask: Why did the two encourage Jesus to stay with them? (It was late; custom would demand that such courtesy be extended even to a stranger, but most importantly, they just wanted him to stay so they could hear more).

Now ask: Do you see significance in the breaking of the bread? (It recalls the Passover which Jesus had with his disciples when he broke bread and said, "This is my body, broken for you, Eat it in remembrance of me")

Seek a brief dialog on this question: What significance does the breaking of bread have for us today? (We do it regularly in remembrance of Christ.

Remind the group that: The term "breaking bread together" has now come to also symbolize fellowship of believers. This probably has come about because of the reference in the Book of Acts of the believers breaking bread together with the apostles and each other.

Inquire: When did Jesus leave? (Verse 31)

Seek an answer to this question: What was the reaction of the two travellers? (Read verse 32. What do think is meant by "our hearts burned within us"?)

Ask: What happened then? Read or have another person read verses 33-35. (As tired as they were physically, they were renewed by their encounter with Jesus. They had to go back and tell the other disciples).

Ask the group: From those same verses, What was happening among the disciples when they returned? Read verses 33-35.

Ask someone to try to put into words the excitement of that experience.

Encourage opinions on this question: Does Easter Sunday cause that excitement in us?

How do we help our children to understand what Easter is all about when there is so much emphasis on candy, Easter bunnies etc.?

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Help the group to be aware that Jesus is often present in our daily life experience when we are not aware of it.

Then say: Yet there are times when we become very aware of the presence of Jesus in a place, a moment, or a situation.

Ask the group to share experiences of a moment when suddenly they understood that Jesus was present.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Knowing the Resurrected Jesus **Luke 24:13-35**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Read the resurrection stories found in Matthew 28:1-28; Mark 16:1-14; and John 20:30 in addition to the story studied in Luke 24:13-35. Find similarities and differences. You may want to give one of the passages to only one of your group if your group is small.

Matthew	Mark	John	Luke
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Who went to the tomb first?

Who greeted the women
at the tomb?

What did Peter do?

What did John do?

Which account tells about Thomas?

Who tells the story of the disciples
on the Road to Emmaus?

Where is there a record of Jesus
eating after his resurrection?

Where does the declaration
that the gospel is to be taken
to the whole world occur?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Knowing the Resurrected Jesus***
Luke 24:13-35**Beginning the Service:**

Sing these or other songs about the resurrection.

He Lives, *The Worship Hymnal* #269; CCLI#17597

The Risen Christ, *The Worship Hymnal* #268; CCLI#4109978

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

Read the following paragraph: (or share this with another person and ask them to read it).

The events of the crucifixion and the resurrection occurred in the city of Jerusalem. When Jesus appeared to the disciples he said, "Peace be with you." Although three major religions claim Jerusalem as a place of importance, there has not been peace there for many centuries. Let us pray that this will be the year that peace comes in the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

Have someone lead in this prayer.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples Luke 24: 36-49

While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you”.

They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you troubled and why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.

When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?”

They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence.

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.

He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” (Luke 24:36-49)

The disciples were gathered together in Jerusalem; some had apparently been together since the crucifixion except for the visits to the tomb made by the women and by Peter and John and the trip to Emmaus made by two travellers. They had grieved together, but at the end of this long day were beginning to affirm that “The Lord is Risen!” The women at the tomb gave evidence; Simon had seen the resurrected Christ, and Jesus had walked the road to Emmaus with two of the disciples.

But when he actually appeared to the group, they were startled and frightened – thinking they had seen a ghost. It is interesting to think that, 2,000 years ago, people allowed themselves to believe in ghosts. Today, 2,000 years of civilization later, many people still believe in the existence of ghosts.

All of these centuries later, we still react in much the same way. The evidence of the presence of Jesus in our midst is startling and somewhat frightening and we hesitate to say it is the living Lord – present among us.

On a recent occasion a young Christian was visiting friends. He had experienced some very difficult circumstances, but in the midst of those circumstances God was very real. He hungered for the word of God; he longed to be used of God to help others.

But as time went by and he was unable to find employment, he became discouraged. His baptism was delayed because of a leak in the church baptistry. All the brightness of those early days of his commitment had turned to darkness. Like the disciples waiting in the room together, his faith wavered and almost died.

On this day, however, a young Christian woman whom he had never met, visited with him for a few moments and then as she was leaving the home turned to him and said, "I see the light of the Lord shining out from you. God is going to do great things in your life. Don't lose the opportunity".

The young man was overwhelmed. He said to his mother, "Why would she say those things? She doesn't even know me. Mom, those are the very things you are saying to me"

The presence of the resurrected Lord was made manifest to this discouraged young man by the words of a fellow believer who felt led to speak strongly and directly. His heart burned within him as he heard her speak God's message to him.

It is this living Lord who speaks to us again and again, **"Peace be with you"**. Certainly the disciples were anything but peaceful. Some had witnessed their friend crucified – a horrible death. One might imagine that those images would endure in their minds for the rest of their lives. Others had failed to admit their commitment to Christ and simply disappeared or even denied knowing him. All felt the disillusionment of the reality that life under the Roman rule was to continue. As far as they could see, nothing was going to change.

They needed to hear and to believe and accept these words of Jesus **"Peace be with you"**.

The story of the resurrected Christ is in these words **"Peace be with you."** In those words, the Christmas story and the Easter story become one. We remember the words of Luke 2:13-14 **"Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favour rests' "**.

"Peace be with you", Jesus said and then invited the startled disciples to look at his hands and feet and see the scars left from the nails which nailed him to the cross.

He then did something that showed that he was indeed alive again when he asked for something to eat.

Once more he teaches them that all that has happened was prophesied and that he had explained it to them. ***“The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sin will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things”*** (verses 47-48).

In that statement Jesus gave his disciples gathered there a task. It is the same task given to all of those who in these centuries since that time call themselves disciples. The task could not be clearer – repentance and forgiveness of sin will be preached in his name to all nations. You are witnesses. You are the ones who will preach. You are the ones who have seen the resurrected Lord, who have experienced his peace, who know the feel of the scars in his hands and feet, who daily eat with him.

The resurrection story was not over on that day so many years ago. It is alive today. We say to one another, “He is Risen” and reply “He is Risen Indeed”. It is the theme of our everyday life. “He is Risen. He is Risen Indeed”.

Call to Commitment:

Ask the group to say to one another “He is Risen” and to reply with “He is Risen Indeed”.

Concluding the Service:

Conclude the service by repeating the reading of Philippians 2: 5-11 which was used during the Gathering Time. Copies may be made from the reading given at the end of the Worship Time Session.

First reader:

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:

Second reader:

***Who being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.***

First reader:

And being found in appearance as a man,

Third reader:

***he humbled himself
and became obedient to death –***

Fourth reader:

even death on a cross!

Third reader:

***Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,***

Fourth reader:

***that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,***

First reader:

***and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)***