



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

April 23, 2023
3rd Sunday of Easter

Pastor James Enderle

First Lesson: [Acts 24:10-21](#)

Psalm of the Day: Psalm 67

Second Lesson: [1 Peter 1:17-21](#)

Gospel Lesson/Sermon Text: [Luke 24:13-35](#)

The Redeemer Lives! He Lives to Restore My Hope Hope for the Hopeless

1. Have we _____ ?
2. Have we _____ ?
3. Jesus _____ our _____.
4. Jesus _____ our _____.

Welcome to worship today at Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. We exist to glorify God. We have set out to do this by gathering around the Gospel so that we may grow in the Gospel and go to others with this Gospel.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from Jesus Christ, our Lord:

Maybe you can think of a trip and a time where you set out and you were so excited. I know several families just had Spring Break and maybe headed down to Florida or Alabama, somewhere nice and warm. You get in the car and you're just excited. Maybe you can think of a time like going on your honeymoon. You're excited for that trip and the whole way you are filled with joy, smiling and talking. Maybe it's on the way to that football game. There is so much joy and you're having fun with each other and enjoying that whole trip.

There are joyful trips and then there are also trips that are kind of filled with sorrow and sadness. Think about that football game when your team gets destroyed and now you are on the way home thinking "Oh man! That was an awful game." Or maybe you are on the way to a meeting or you have to deal with something that you just know is not going to go well, but you have to go there and you are regretting every minute of that trip, worrying about what is going to happen. Maybe it's getting in the car on the way to a funeral; the sadness and the sorrow. Maybe it's on the way home from a doctor's visit, where you have received life-changing news. You get in the car and you almost don't speak a word.

There are journeys of joy and there are journeys of sadness. When we find the Emmaus disciples today, they are certainly on one of those journeys of sadness. We'd say that they were pretty hopeless. We are going to see here how Jesus brings **Hope for the Hopeless** and how He does that for us as well. But as we look at that, it's important to look at what hope is for Christians.

When we talk about hope, we don't talk about hope as in "I hope it doesn't snow again this week and that spring is finally here." That's like a wish or a want. Christian hope is a certainty. It's a future certainty. We know that God promises this and God's promises are true. So if a Christian hope is certain, how can we lose that hope? The theme of today's service is that our **Redeemer Lives to Restore My Hope**. If Christian hope is certain, how can we lose it?

As we meet these disciples, they certainly had lost their hope. Why did they lose their hope? We meet them and as it speaks about them walking and talking, it uses all of these different words to describe their discussion. You can tell that they are really throwing around all the things that had happened and they are trying to figure out why this happened; who Jesus is and what happened. They are trying to figure it out.

As they walked along, it says Jesus came up **but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"** One of them says, "Are you the only one here in Jerusalem; everyone knows what has happened! How can you not know what has happened?" And Jesus, as He is the great teacher, He gets them to explain. "Tell me what has happened. Let me understand what you think has happened and what is happening." So they explained. **"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 they 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 this took place."** You can hear it. **...we had hoped...** They've lost hope.

*Have we lost hope in the same way? What had these disciples lost hope in? Listen—it says **"...we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel."** That word for "redeemed" can also mean "liberate." So what are they really thinking about? It's easy to say these disciples didn't get it, but do you remember those Twelve disciples, the closest disciples, as Jesus is ascending up into heaven right before that? Do you know what they asked? "Now are you going to restore the kingdom of Israel?" ([Acts 1:6](#)) What are they thinking about? They're not thinking about the Messiah and Jesus' rule in a spiritual way but in an earthly way. "What can Jesus do for us? He can make the Jewish people rule again and kick out those Romans and make our country great again."*

Would we ever think that way? Would we ever put our hope in Jesus for things that He hasn't promised us and therefore, because we're hoping that God will do these things

for us that He hasn't promised, we begin lose hope in God? Are we ever like those disciples that are so concerned about our country, that say "How could God not let this country be a Christian country? The country is falling apart. Where is God? What is God doing?" Do we lose hope because we feel that God has promised that we're going to live in a Christian country where God has never promised us that?

What about us then personally? What about for your life, maybe the successes in your life or for your family, for your children? The emphasis of our year this year at Morrison Zion is "Helping parents to be equipped to be Christian parents." One of the ways we're doing this is by sending out emails and devotions about 14 Gospel principles of parenting. We just sent out the first one, an introduction that talks about how parents can either be ambassadors or owners. A parent would never say, "I own my kids," but do you think you have it all planned out? Do you have all these hopes for what is going to happen? Are you so focused on the earthy life, hoping about who they are going to marry, about their kids, or even their athletics; hoping they'll win a State championship some day and hoping in all these things that God doesn't promise us? Or are you focused on being an ambassador that shows God's love and focuses on that most important hope—the hope of salvation?

We can lose our hope when some of those things we've hoped for (for us, for our kids, for our country, for all these things) we don't get because we put unrealistic expectations on our God. God doesn't promise us any of those things. What does He promise? Jesus is going to bring Himself to us.

For these disciples as Jesus talks with them, He explains why they have lost this hope. He says, ***"How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah 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.*** These disciples knew the Scriptures but the truth is they were blind to what it was really teaching; blind to the real treasure in Scripture and blind to what God was saying Jesus and the Messiah would do. The disciples didn't recognize Jesus as He was walking along, but that wasn't the biggest problem. They were blind to what God was trying to tell them through His Word.

Have we become blind as well? We are so similar to these disciples. We are surrounded with God's Word all the time; on Sundays, in your devotions. We have God's Word around us all the time. Maybe we begin to lose our awe and say "God's Word can't really do much." Or we start to look for the promises and the things that we want to hear, or we start to make Jesus/God the God we want Him to be instead of really seeing the God in our Savior, Christ.

Jesus makes it clear by opening up the Scriptures. He's not opening up Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the ones that speak about His life. He's opening up that Old Testament.

Previously He talked to the people and said "You look to the Scriptures for life but these are the Scriptures that testify about Christ," about Him. [\(John 5:39-40\)](#) So He opens up the Scriptures, starting with Moses and the Prophets, maybe starting in [Genesis 3](#) and that first promise of a Savior, and maybe on to [Isaiah 7](#) and that promise of the virgin and the Prince of Peace, [Isaiah 52-53](#) and that Suffering Servant and how Jesus would take the sins of the world upon Him and forgive our sins. This is what Jesus did. He opened up the Scriptures to them.

In doing so, what did He do? *Jesus redirects our hope.* He helps them to see where their hope should really be focused on and that their hope isn't in this earthly thing that can be shifted and taken away or that only lasts for a short time. He redirects their hope on the most important thing, and He does that for us. He redirects our hope to see Christ as our Savior; a Savior that isn't here to meet our whims and our fancies and to do such a small thing in our daily life but to do such a great thing, to save, to come to this world, to die for us. This is what our Savior does.

Notice then as He is walking with them. They invite Him in. He breaks bread. And finally they notice Him. But what is interesting is when they see Him. Do you know what they do? They don't say "Oh, it's Jesus! How amazing we saw Jesus!" What do they say? They say these words. ***"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"*** What were they so joyful about? Of course that they saw Jesus but what is really interesting about this awesome story with the Emmaus disciples is if this was a story about proving that Jesus had risen from the dead, that Jesus wanted to tell the Emmaus disciples "Hey, I'm risen," what would He have done? He was walking and he would have just said "Hey guys, I'm Jesus." They would say "Oh, you're alive!" But His purpose is so much greater. As they see Jesus and finally understand, they don't say "We saw Jesus," they say "Weren't our hearts burning as He opened up the Scriptures." He restored their hope as *Jesus restores our hope.*

He restores our hope by helping us understand that we can find all that we need in those Scriptures. As we hear those words day in and day out, as we come and worship, as we lean on our baptism and take the Lord's Supper, we understand that the Holy Spirit is working. Why is that important? Why was it important for Jesus to not just say "Hey, I'm alive"? He wasn't going to be around that much longer. So they needed something else to assure them and strengthen them and to help them understand where their hope really comes from. He redirects them and restores their hope by opening up those Scriptures and saying "You have the truth. You have a hope that will not fade. You can go back to it day in and day out and understand that God loves you and that you are forgiven." This great plan (that many would say is so foolish) is that the Messiah HAD to suffer these things.

As they hear this and understand that He had to die and rise again, how are they changed? They started out their journey depressed and sullen. As Jesus appears to them and shows and explains the Scriptures after coming in, breaking bread, why did they invite Him in? It was evening and what does it say right away; then they get up and go to Jerusalem. It's nighttime. How safe is it for them to be traveling to Jerusalem at night? Not very safe, but it doesn't matter. They are now filled with this hope and joy and they must share it.

That's what Easter does for us. We are on this Easter journey throughout our whole life knowing that things are not always going to be easy. We're going to have difficulties and some of the hopes and dreams we have that are our desires aren't going to happen. But the hope that Jesus gives us doesn't fade. Those promises He has for us are there even in the darkest days. So yes, we'll have times of mourning, we'll have times of sadness, but we're lifted up again with the hope that is certain, and a hope that leads us to go forth in joy, to rejoice knowing what God has done for us; that He loves us day in and day out. We can share that message with others that we have a true hope. It's a hope that does not rely on who is in power here or what grade we get or anything else; it's knowing that even sinners like us are loved, forgiven, redeemed, and have heaven in store. Amen.

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. [\(Philippians 4:7\)](#) Amen.