

# The Pray More Advent Retreat

Inspiring talks to help you  
prepare to celebrate the  
birth of our Lord,  
Jesus Christ



## Was it Not Necessary? The Story of the Road to Emmaus

by Scott Powell

### Reflective Questions

#### Luke 24:13-53

#### On the Road to Emmaus

**13** Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles[a] from Jerusalem. **14** They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. **15** As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; **16** but they were kept from recognizing him.

**17** He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. **18** One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

**19** “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. **20** The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; **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. **22** In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning **23** but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. **24** Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

**25** He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

**28** As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. **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.

**30** When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. **31** Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. **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?”

**33** They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together **34** and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” **35** Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

### **Jesus Appears to the Disciples**

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

**37** They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. **38** He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? **39** 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.”

**40** When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. **41** And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, “Do you have anything here to eat?” **42** They gave him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he took it and ate it in their presence.

**44** 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.”

**45** Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. **46** He told them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, **47** and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. **48** You are witnesses of these things. **49** 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.”

- When the two disciples were speaking to Jesus, before recognizing Him, they were so downcast, disappointed and let-down. They said, “We had hoped.” They had hoped that Jesus was going to redeem them. Can you think of certain things in your life that you had hoped Jesus would do in a certain way, but didn’t? What are those things? Instead of what you had hoped would happen, what *did* happen?
- Now recognizing those things, think back to what Jesus said to those disciples. “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” ... Essentially, Jesus asks, “Was it not necessary?” As hard as it may be, can you begin to understand how God may have allowed certain things to play out in your life because it was necessary -- necessary to shape you into the person you were created to become, necessary to bring you closer to Jesus, necessary to sanctify you?
- When the disciples were disappointed and sad -- heartbroken, even, that’s when Jesus goes to meet them. He goes to find them. When you are disappointed, sad, and heartbroken, Jesus comes to meet you and find you then too. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted. Cling to this truth the next time you are feeling doubtful. And say this prayer:

“God, I trust you. I trust that it’s necessary that I face these things, and I know that I don’t have to face them alone because I know that you walk right beside me whether I see you or not -- I know and I trust that you’re there.”

- It’s not until the disciples were sharing in the Holy Eucharist with Jesus that they recognize Him. When was the last time you recognized Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist, truly acknowledged His presence as you receive His body and blood? Each time we receive the Eucharist, we are being brought from darkness to life. Our eyes go from seeing sin, destruction, and all that is wrong in the world to seeing life, forgiveness and redemption. When was the last time you went to Mass and allowed Jesus to open your eyes to the light? Focus on that light the next time you receive the Eucharist, and cling to it when you inevitably face your trials later in the day or later that week.
- What are the things in your life that you have to look at and accept as necessary so that they can be used to shape you into the man or woman you are meant to be? Are there things that you have previously believed “escaped God’s sight?” How does it change things to now know that God is

in control of \*all\* of it? How does that change your life, how you suffer, how you live, how you interact with others?

“We have a God who is concerned with taking those crosses and making them glorious -- looking at us in the eyes and saying, “Was it not necessary that you suffered under those things, that you dealt with those issues and that you had those relationships so I could build you into the man or the woman that I want you to be -- after my own heart? This is how saints are forged. We don’t know the mind of God. We don’t know why God allows some things to happen and doesn’t allow other things to happen; why He allows certain evils to perpetuate themselves in the world... but I do believe in a God who is in control of all of it -- nothing escapes his sight.”