

The gospel of Luke is written with a Gentile or Greek-speaking cultured people in mind. In writing the gospel account Luke focuses upon the role and importance of women and the poor, more than the other three gospels, and relates the most parable teachings of Jesus in his story of who Jesus is, how he was and is in the world, and how that changes even us.

The four gospels all tell the story of the resurrection of Jesus. Luke's is different in the insistence upon the fearlessness of the numerous woman who go to the tomb and then tell the male disciples of what they've found. They are active while the men are passive, they continue their relationship with Jesus while the men seem to think it's all over and have thrown in the towel. Today's scripture is the second event that happens on that resurrection day after the initial encounter with the women [Luke 24:1-12] which the disciples didn't believe. Notice in particular how Luke insists upon hearing and seeing, the ear and the eye, as he often does throughout his gospel telling of the life of Jesus.

**all these things that had happened:** The travelers are talking, or gossiping, about what "seemed to [the apostles] an idle tale (or fake news), [which] they did not believe." Luke 24:11

*What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?*: In Luke's gospel, these are the first words of the resurrected Jesus. The disciples haven't recognized Jesus, as they should have, here they need him to explain or translate everything for them in order that they might see & hear. The first words of Jesus do not provoke a joyous reconnection, but rather a sad surprise – how can this man not know what's happened?

**Sad:** the word used in Greek is rarely used in the Bible. It refers to the facial expression vacillating between sadness, severity, exasperation, a bad mood, trouble and anxiety. Pregnant with meaning, the word implies that the faces of the two pilgrims were undeniably expressive of their souls.

**Cleopas:** This name is an abbreviation (or nickname) for the longer name Cleopatra (feminine) or Cleopatros (masculine). It's possible that he's the same man mentioned as the husband or father of Marie in John 19:25 "Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene." It's possible that he's the husband of Mary's [the mother of Jesus] sister; and hence the uncle of Jesus.

**Are you the only stranger:** the response seems aggressive and accusatory.

*some women of our group astounded us.* Don't forget that despite the persistence of the women the men didn't believe them, thinking that their story was fake news, mistaken. Luke 24:11.

**slow:** this seems to be the principal description of the pilgrims. They are slow to hear, see and understand on so many levels. Are we that different?

**HE INTERPRETED:** it's as if Jesus is speaking a different language, that must be translated, interpreted, resaid in a new language for them to understand.

## SCRIPTURES FOR SUNDAY 4.23.2017

### Luke 24:13-35

New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

<sup>13</sup> Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> and talking with each other about **all these things that had happened**. <sup>15</sup> While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near **and went with them**, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup> And he said to them, "*What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?*" They stood still, looking **sad**. <sup>18</sup> Then one of them, whose name was **Cleopas**, answered him, "**Are you the only stranger** in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" <sup>19</sup> He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup> and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup> But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup> Moreover, *some women of our group astounded us*. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup> and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but they did not see him." <sup>25</sup> Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how **slow** of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup> Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup> Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, **HE INTERPRETED** to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

<sup>28</sup> As they came near the village to which they were going, **he walked ahead as if he were going on**. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their

Curiously the pilgrims reuse the words expressed three times by Jesus earlier in Luke's gospel about what would happen to him (Luke 9:21-22; 9:44; 17:25; 18:31-33) and yet they still cannot recognize the connection that we as readers and hearers of the story should recognize. It's like an eye-wink from Luke to us as the readers: *Remember what he said earlier? Do you see? Do you get it yet? Go back and reread it if you don't. Do you get it?*

**and went with them | he walked ahead as** : The Greek word is πορεύομαι [poreuomai] meaning: to travel, journey, go [with or alongside]. It is used throughout the last half of the gospel, starting with Luke 9:51 When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to **go** to Jerusalem. The verb of motion has strong connotations of community, collaboration, solidarity; of walking in the way that Jesus walked and lived.

**HE VANISHED**: Curiously Jesus in this story is both present and absent. Theologically we can say that such is the way that God is with us: an absent presence.

**THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD**: this is the exact same expression that Luke uses later in Acts 2:42 "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to **THE BREAKING OF BREAD** and the prayers."

### Questions for the practice of Examen & Contemplation

**\*What strikes or shimmers for you in this passage?**

**\*If you imagine yourself in this story who and where are you? Are you on one of the pilgrims talking and walking with Jesus? Someone on the road watching from afar? ; or maybe observing from the other side of the Inn? Or maybe one of the disciples confused, waiting in the upper room for clarity, to whom the pilgrims run?**

**\*How is this story of recognizing the presence of God in Jesus similar to experience(s) you've had in your own life?**

**\*How is God both present and absent? How have you experienced that in life? How does this story talk about that theological vision of the Divine Presence? How do you struggle with this? How does this encourage you? Talk with God about this in prayer.**

Credits. I'm heavily influenced by the exegetical analysis of François BOVON in "L'Évangile Selon Sain Luke" III d. Labor et Fides, Geneva.

eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and **HE VANISHED** from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup> That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup> They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup> Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in **THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD**.