

**4/19/26**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**For Group Meetings from April 12<sup>th</sup> – April 18<sup>th</sup>**

**OUR MISSION:** As a missional congregation we *celebrate* Christ's presence, *invite* people into a growing relationship with Jesus, and *equip* them to *serve* in a broken world.

**Prayer of the Day:** O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING TOGETHER:**

**Share:** How did last week's scripture (John 20:19-31) work in your life this week?

**Mission:**

- What was most satisfying about your ministry last week?
- Where do you see God at work?
- How did you participate in God's missional activity?
- How did inviting go last Sunday?

**Hear:** Luke 24:13-35

**Explore Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. What is surprising about the two disciples' inability to recognize Jesus?
2. What question does Jesus ask them first? And why might that matter?
3. What specific hope do they say has been disappointed?

**Connect Questions:** (Use these or develop your own.)

1. When have you understood something only in hindsight, like the disciples?
2. When has sharing a meal or gathering with others deepened your faith?
3. What in your life feels delayed, hidden, or unresolved?

**Memorize this verse:** "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?'" (Luke 24:32) When has your heart burned recently?

**BIBLICAL EQUIPPING APART:**

**Obey:** During this week follow through on your intentions.

**Meditate:** Meditate on Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19. How does this speak into your life?

**Reflect:** What have I learned in my week of living with this text? What can I share with my group when we next meet?

**Notes for ChristCare leaders:**

Notice that it's a road. Not an upper room or garden or mountain top or any of the other places we expect revelation to take place. It's a road. And it's not a pronouncement or discourse, but a conversation. I think these details are important. Sometimes, it's enough just to see Jesus, or to hear of his resurrection, or to be promised his presence. And sometimes it's not. Sometimes it takes longer. Sometimes the move from doubt, fear, and grief to faith, hope, and love takes both the time it takes to walk from one town to another and the opportunity for an open and honest conversation. Can we create spaces where that happens? Where there is time to mull over what we've heard? Where we can talk over life experience in the light of faith. Where we can be honest about our disappointments and grief? Where we sense the grace and patience to bear with and explore each other's questions? I hope your Christcare group is one of those spaces. Because if we can create this space, we'll need to start by creating room to voice what may be the three saddest words in Scripture...or in our lives. "We had hoped..." In this case, it's "we had hoped he was the one to redeem Israel." In ours it might be, "we had hoped our child would recover," or "this job would last," or "for a better relationship" or "that the cancer would go into remission". Few things are more painful than dashed hopes. And so, before Jesus interprets Scripture, before he breaks bread, he does two things. He comes along side these forlorn disciples and he asks them to name their loss. Naming our pain, our grief, our loss are essential ingredients to moving beyond them. Not erasing them or even leaving them fully behind but transcending them so that they are no longer what defines us. Naming our pain creates room to be surprised.

The disciples are disappointed in part because they fundamentally misunderstood how God was working to save the world. Expecting a God of power, they got one of vulnerability. Expecting a warrior God, they got a suffering servant. And while it might be tempting to chide them for their lack of understanding, I think it's important to recognize that pretty much everything they had experienced or been taught thus far made it impossible for them to imagine God's work in Jesus. Seen this way, Jesus' words about hearts as foolish as they are slow to understand are less rebuke than lament. Grief at the pain they suffer. To put it another way, while the disciples may be disappointed because they misunderstand God's work, their pain and grief are real. And the first thing Jesus does is invite them to name it. So that there is now room to be surprised by God's decision to show up just where they least expect God to be.

That still happens. When we name our grief, pain, disappointment, and fear with the assurance of grace, we find these things have less of a hold on us and discover room to be surprised, once again, by God's presence, love, and promises. So maybe you can take time this week this week to name "what things" you are grieving, fearing, suffering - naming these things as real and understandable and lamentable - in order to escape the fear that these things are the only reality, and in this way to make room to be surprised by God's patient and loving embrace. As we do this, we might be reminded that it's a road we are on. And while some may need only walk seven miles, others may feel that it's more like seventy or even 700. That's okay, Jesus will walk that distance with us, and so will those who surround you now. And it's a conversation. We can bring our hopes - dashed or still growing - and our questions - spoken or still lingering in the depths of the heart - with the hope that our community will not just welcome them, but cherish them. Dashed hopes to burning hearts. Confession to Lord's Supper. Disappointment to joy. This is the movement of the Christian faith and experience because it is, finally, the movement from cross to empty tomb and from death to life. The road is before us. Jesus walks with us.

**Thanks be to God,**

Pastor Thadd (tbook@desertcross.org)

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*Traditional version:*

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from  
evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power,  
And the glory, forever and ever. Amen

*Contemporary version:*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,  
your will be done on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those  
Who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial  
And deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the  
power, and the glory are yours,  
Now and forever. Amen