**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

***We Are All Jesus Commissioned***

May 19th, In the Year of Our Lord 2024

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(All Scripture is from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted.)

**Two Men on The Road to Emmaus. . . With The Eleven**

**Luke 24:13-35 & 36-50; Acts 1:1-9 “Jesus’ Spirit Ekklesia”**

Many Christians are familiar with the story of the two disciples of Jesus on the road to Emmaus who were encountered by the Resurrected Jesus. I know a man who went on a Christian retreat seeking spiritual renewal, and the retreat was named after the Emmaus experience (Luke 24). Christian retreats titled *A Walk to Emmaus* are designed to inspire, challenge and equip Christians for ministry in their home, work or any situation in life. Jesus’ walking with the disciples on the Emmaus Road is a very personal experience we can all have with the Resurrected Lord. Jesus’ presence is always with Believers. Jesus said that He will be with His disciples to the end of the age (“I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Matt. 28:20), . . . this includes you and me. The question is… do we have the eyes to see and the ears to hear? It was not until the two disciples stopped to eat a meal in the evening and invited the man with whom they had been walking for seven miles did they recognize Him to be Jesus (Luke 24:31). Similarly, Mary Magdalene mistook the resurrected Jesus to be a gardener (John 20:15). This may be viewed as people being in shock and not being able to comprehend their senses correctly. Or, it may be viewed that Jesus actually appeared a little different in a resurrected body.

 Who were the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus? Some scholars teach that “Cleopas”, named in verse 18, is the same person named in John’s Gospel (19:25) but spells his name “Clopas.”

Therefore, the soldiers did these things. But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of **Clopas**, and Mary Magdalene. (John 19:25)

The early church historian, Eusebius, identifies Clopas as Cleopas who was the brother of Joseph, the legal father of Jesus (Luke 3:23), as well as the father of Simon/Simeon, the second bishop of Jerusalem (Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, 3, 11 and 4, 22). However, there is much speculation as the identity of the second disciple who was on the Emmaus Road. The guesses range from the wife of Clopas to Luke or Peter. However, Mary the wife of Clopas identified as a person standing at Jesus’ cross garners strong support to be the second disciple with whom Jesus walks on the road to Emmaus. Luke simply notes there were “two of them” not referring to a family relationship. But it is of note that at the end of the journey to Emmaus the two went to the same home for an evening meal (Luke 24:29).

We know the Emmaus event takes place three days after the crucifixion because of the statement “It is the third day since these things happened” in verse 21. This is the same day of the Resurrection. Jesus’ Resurrection ministry time was forty days and then He ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9). Let us read Luke’s Gospel and see what we can learn from the witness of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

**Luke 24:**13 And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.14 And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. 15 While they were talking and discussing, **Jesus Himself** approached and *began* traveling with them. 16 But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

17 And He [ Jesus ] said to them,

"What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?"

And they stood still, looking sad.

 18 One *of them*, named Cleopas, answered and said to Him,

"Are You the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?"

 19 And He [ Jesus ] said to them,

"What things?"

And they said to Him,

"The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, 20 and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and crucified Him.

21 "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.

22 "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.

24 "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."

25 And He [ Jesus ] said to them,

"O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!

26 "Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?"

27 Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.28 And they approached the village where they were going, and He acted as though He were going farther.29 But they urged Him, saying,

"Stay with us, for it is *getting* toward evening, and the day is now nearly over."

So He went in to stay with them. 30 When He had reclined *at the table* with them, He took the bread and blessed *it*, and breaking *it*, He *began* giving *it* to them.31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished from their sight. 32 They said to one another,

"Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

33 And they got up that very hour and **returned to Jerusalem**, and found gathered together **the eleven** and those who were with them, 34 saying,

"The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon."

 35 They *began* to relate their experiences [ **To the eleven.** ] on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

**Verses 33 – 35 are Transition verses . . . Two men on the Road to Emmaus went to Jerusalem and were present with the eleven when Jesus commissioned them (Luke 24:44-48).**

36 While they [ Two Emmaus Men ] were telling these things, He [ Jesus ] Himself stood in their [ **The 2 and 11 Disciples** ] midst and said to them,

"Peace be to you."

 37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.

 38 And He said to them,

"Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?

39 "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

 40 And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

 41 While they still could not believe *it* because of their joy and amazement, He said to them,

"Have you anything here to eat?"

 42 They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish; 43 and He took it and ate *it* before them. 44 Now He said to them,

"These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled."

 45 Then **He opened their minds** to understand the Scriptures,46 and He said to them,

"Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,47 and that **repentance for forgiveness of sins** would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, **beginning from Jerusalem.**

**Micah 4:2** Many nations will come and say, "Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD And to the house of the God of Jacob, That He may teach us about His ways And that we may walk in His paths." For from Zion will go forth the law, Even the word of the LORD **from Jerusalem.**

 48 "You are witnesses of these things. 49 "And behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high."

 50 And He [ Jesus ] led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. 51 While He was blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. 52 And they, after worshiping Him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, 53 and were continually in the temple praising God.

 Luke provides a detailed Resurrection appearance account that reached beyond the eleven disciples. During the Resurrection time, Jesus witnessed to many people outside the inner circle of the disciples. This included the two Jesus encountered on the road to Emmaus who were also included in the same Gospel commissioning as the eleven disciples. Within the Emmaus report, we need to pay close attention to verses 22-24.

Luke 24: **22** "But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, 23 and did not find His body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive. **24** "Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but Him they did not see."

 From Luke 24:22-24, the two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus were telling their witness to Jesus and confirmed that they were with the disciples and the women on the morning of the third day prior to Jesus’ tomb being found empty. Their statement highlights the fact that there were many more people present with the disciples and the women during the time of the Cross that are not named. In addition, verse 24, identifies that there were at least two sets of people who went to Jesus’ tomb. The first were the women who found Jesus’ tomb empty, and the second group went to verify the report of the women. From this text, it is not known who all was in the second group regarding men or women or both. This is important because the four Gospels complement each other regarding who went to the tomb, and, in doing so, provide a fuller report. Remember, prior to Luke writing about the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, he identified in part some of the women in verse 10.

Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. (Luke 24:10)

 It is important to recognize the fuller picture of how many people actually went to Jesus’ tomb and found it empty. This impacts the effect of the fabricated story of the chief priests and elders who gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep.' 14 "And if this should come to the governor's ears, we will win him over and keep you out of trouble." 15 And they took the money and did as they had been instructed; and this story was widely spread among the Jews, and is to this day (Matthew 28:11-15).

 Once the fabricated story of the chief priest and elders began to circulate around Jerusalem, many people had already witnessed the empty tomb or had been told by the women and men who were eyewitnesses. The fact that the enemies had to invent an alternative explanation to account for Jesus’ empty tomb tells us that the leaders believed Jesus’ tomb was empty, and they could not account for His missing body.

**Acts of the Holy Spirit in the Lives of the Apostles/Disciples**

 Luke continues his historical narrative by writing a letter detailing what many believe to be the beginning record of the Christian Church as it was established to be a separate identity from Judaism about 2000 years ago. The Roman and Greek culture of the first century viewed the new movement as an off-shoot of Judaism. In fact, the new Jesus’ movement was called “**The Way**” in Acts 9:1-2.

1 Now Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest, 2 and asked for letters from him to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to **the Way**, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

The first Bible I was given when I was a teenager has the “The Way” as the title on the cover.

**Acts 1**

**Transitional narrative: Gospel to History of the God’s Spirit Believer’s Assembly**

**Jesus Commissions Congregation of Disciples “The Ekklesia”. . .**

**To – Witness His Gospel Message**

**Acts 1:1-9 1** The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, **2** until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. **3** To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over *a period of* forty days and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. **4** Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, "Which," *He said*, "you heard of from Me; **5** for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

**6**So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?" **7** He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; **8** but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and **you shall be My witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." **9** And after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.

 This Jesus commissioning highlights how God empowers Believers to fulfill His plan of salvation and to serve. Yes, this statement is made to the apostles but we see the same commissioning applied to others like Stephen (Acts 7). Stephen was not with the apostles originally. Stephen was chosen to be a table server (deacon) in Acts 6. The apostles needed to distribute the ministry work as it became too much for them (Acts 6). I will teach more about how Jesus commissioned all Believers next Sunday. Jesus did not limit His commissioning to a professional class of ministers.

**Jesus’ Ascension and Pentecost**

Many Christians observed the **Day of Ascension** (Acts 1:9) on May 9, 2024, which was ten days ago from the preaching of this sermon. Today is May 19, 2024, which is the day **Pentecost** is observed. On this day, the disciples received additional empowerment by the Holy Spirit to fulfill the Great Commission. Luke accurately reports the Pentecost miracle in Acts 2. The name Pentecost is derived from the Greek word *pentekoste,* meaning “fiftieth”. Hence, Pentecost is fifty days after Passover.

The origin of Pentecost is from a Jewish feast (“Feast of Harvest”) celebrated since the Old Testament times of the Exodus (also called the “Feast of Weeks” in observance of the grain harvest: Exodus 23, Exodus 24, Leviticus 16, Numbers 28, and Deuteronomy 16). Below is an online Jewish source detailing Jewish belief.

The commandment to "count the Omer" is to count the days between Passover and Shavuot. The Torah states that from the day the "wave offering", the Omer, was brought (on the second day of Passover) we should count each day for forty-nine days, which brings us right to the holiday of Shavuot on the fiftieth day.

The Hebrew word for "and you shall count" used in the Torah is "u'sefartem", which also denotes "shining" or "brilliance", as in the phrase "[gem]stone sapir" (Ezekiel 1:26) - translated "sapphire" in English. The term describing the ten principal expressions of divine manifestation, known in mystical literature as the ten sefirot, also bears this meaning. The implication is that the mitzvah of Sefirat HaOmer - counting the Omer - draws down upon us the influence of the ten sefirot, causes them to "shine" upon us.

<https://www.chabad.org/kabbalah/article_cdo/aid/379962/jewish/Count-and-Wave.htm>

Obviously, Pentecost is directly tied to the Jewish Passover and is specifically a reminder of the last of ten plagues with which God judged Egypt in order to force Pharoah to let the Hebrews go. We Christians must not take for granted that everyone knows about the Passover of the Exodus. We live in a biblically ignorant society. From those who may not know about the last plague, we Christians need to be accurate in reporting the event, because it is a direct reflection to the Cross of Christ.

Specifically, during the Exodus event, God turned the tide against Pharoah and used his own judgement against him. Pharoah had ordered the killing of every Hebrew newborn baby boy in order to keep the Hebrew population from growing (Exodus 1:16). So, God, after nine plagues (See Exodus 7-11), warned Pharaoh one last time to let His people go or He will come at night and take the life of every first-born from every home. However, by God’s instruction through Moses, if a house had the blood of a lamb smeared on the doorposts, then no death came to that house. Death “passed over” that family because they trusted in the Lord for life. This last plague parallels Jesus’ Cross in that He was the sacrificed lamb for the sins of the world and everyone who trusts in Him shall not perish to eternal death, separated from God in eternal Hell, but gain everlasting life which is to be with God for eternity in His heaven (John 3:16).

So, what about the Christian Pentecost observed ten days after the Day of Ascension? Pentecost fulfills God’s prophecy through His prophet Joel.

**Joel 28:**28-29 28 "It will come about after this That I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; And your sons and daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, Your young men will see visions. 29 "Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days.

 Joel’s prophetic words are seen in the Acts of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles at Pentecost. There were many people living in Jerusalem who were from foreign lands and spoke different languages that originated from around the Mediterranean Sea. The miracles took place when the Holy Spirit empowered Jesus’ disciples to speak in the native language of the many different people present (Acts 2). By this Holy Spirit empowerment. . . God gained the attention of the foreign language speakers in Jerusalem who were observing the Jewish holy day of Pentecost. This is significant in that God’s intent was displayed to reach the world starting with Jerusalem with the Gospel Message (Luke 24:47). These “Jerusalemites” witnessed a miraculous event to report. . .they heard the “mighty deeds of God” in their own language, spoken by men who were not from their home being empowered by God’s Holy Spirit.

**Summary**

We have read two major events in the historical Gospel narrative of Luke, The Road to Emmaus and Pentecost. Despite the betrayal and abandonment by all but one of the twelve disciples, (John was at the Cross: John 19:26-27), Jesus’ divine love reaches through the chaos and says. . . “Father forgive them for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). God never stops calling for people to surrender to Him for the forgiveness of sin and be delivered from a life of death and destruction. Notice that the two on the road to Emmaus thought that Jesus might be the Messiah to redeem Israel (Luke 24:21). Jesus still witnessed to them. This is the eternal message from the Cross that no misunderstanding can separate us from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39).

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 Just as it is written,

 "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

 37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

 **AMEN**