



MINISTRIES

A Ministry of the Athens Universal Life Church
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<https://aulc.us>

More than Bread

SERMON IN A SENTENCE: Christ makes himself known to us through the scriptures and the breaking of bread.

Hello Friends! I am Doctor Rob White with the A U L C Ministries and I am happy that you could take a few minutes out of your busy week to join us!

Well, Easter has come and gone and here we are in April of twenty twenty four! This year is going by fast and it's hard to imagine just where all the time has gone!

We get so busy with our everyday lives, with work, family, extracurricular activities, and an assortment of everything else, that we don't really see what is actually in front of us, don't we?

We become focused on what we are doing and get a kind of tunnel vision of the World around us. We become "blind" to the outside world and we only "see" our little world and that becomes the most important thing at the time. We don't take time to let others into our little world and this makes us only see what we want to see and nothing else.

Kind of like what the two men on the road to Emmaus was like when they were approached by a stranger!

Let's go to our scripture lesson today and see how these two men were able to break out of their own little world and see more around them!

Our scripture lesson today comes from the Gospel of Luke chapter twenty four verses thirteen to thirty five.

Starting at verse thirteen:

Now that same day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.

Together they were discussing everything that had taken place.

And while they were discussing and arguing, Jesus Himself came near and began to walk along with them.

But they were prevented from recognizing Him.

Then He asked them, “What is this dispute that you’re having with each other as you are walking?” And they stopped walking and looked discouraged.

The one named Cleopas answered Him, “Are You the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that happened there in these days?”

“What things?” He asked them.

So they said to Him, “The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene, who was a Prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people,

and how our chief priests and leaders handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified Him.

But we were hoping that He was the One who was about to redeem Israel. Besides all this, it’s the third day since these things happened.

Moreover, some women from our group astounded us. They arrived early at the tomb,

and when they didn’t find His body, they came and reported that they had seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they didn’t see Him.”

He said to them, “How unwise and slow you are to believe in your hearts all that the prophets have spoken!

Didn’t the Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into His glory?”

Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

They came near the village where they were going, and He gave the impression that He was going farther.

But they urged Him: “Stay with us, because it’s almost evening, and now the day is almost over.” So He went in to stay with them.

It was as He reclined at the table with them that He took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him, but He disappeared from their sight.

So they said to each other, “Weren’t our hearts ablaze within us while He was talking with us on the road and explaining the Scriptures to us?”

That very hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those with them gathered together,

who said, “The Lord has certainly been raised, and has appeared to Simon!”

Then they began to describe what had happened on the road and how He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

May the Lord add His Blessing on the reading of His Word!

Two disciples were walking to Emmaus, a small village near Jerusalem. They had been in Jerusalem for the Passover, and were just returning home. They very well may have been present at Jesus' crucifixion.

These two disciples were talking with each other about the terrible events of the weekend. A week ago, people had welcomed Jesus with Hosannas and palm branches. Jesus' ministry seemed really to be taking off.

But the crowds had shifted suddenly, as crowds often do. One weekend, they shouted "Hosanna!" The next weekend, they shouted, "Crucify him!" As these two disciples walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus, they were talking about that. Their heads were swimming with the suddenness of it all—and their hearts were full of despair.

Then Jesus came near and joined them, but they didn't recognize him. Jesus asked, "**What are you talking about as you walk, and are sad?**" (verse 17 of our scripture lesson).

They stopped! Cleopas said: "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things which have happened there in these days?" (verse 18 of our scripture lesson).

That's pretty funny, isn't it! They were asking Jesus if he was the only person who didn't know what had happened in Jerusalem—when, in fact, he was the only one who really did know what had happened there. But as innocently as a baby, Jesus asked: "**What things?**" (verse 19 of our scripture lesson).

So they began to tell him about Jesus—about his great promise—about their great hopes—about the fickle crowds—and about the Bad Friday that had ended everything. They spoke the saddest words that anyone ever speaks. They said, "We were hoping...." But they no longer hoped!

Then they told Jesus about the women who had discovered the empty tomb and the men who had verified that Jesus was gone. But they did not know what to make of that. Perhaps someone had stolen the body. "We were hoping," they said.

- They had hoped that Jesus would be the Messiah.
- They had hoped that Jesus might restore Israel to greatness.
- They had hoped that Jesus might drive the hated Roman soldiers out of Israel.
- They had hoped that Jesus would be the one for whom they had waited so long.

But they no longer hoped. They said, "We were hoping." That's the language of broken hearts—"We were hoping."

But hadn't the women said that they had discovered the open tomb? Hadn't the men verified that Jesus was no longer to be found in that tomb? Yes, of course. But this pair of disciples didn't know what to make of that. It would have been quite a stretch for them to acknowledge that God had raised Jesus from the dead. The fact that the tomb was empty was far too little evidence to conclude that Jesus was alive. "We were hoping," they said—hope in the past tense.

But Jesus said, "**Foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!**" (verse 25 of our scripture lesson). And then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus began to teach them about himself.

When it says, "Moses and the prophets," it means the Bible. In Jesus' day, the New Testament didn't yet exist. The holiest books of the Bible were the Torah—the books of Moses—the first five books of the Bible—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The books of the prophets were the next most holy. So, beginning with Moses and the prophets—the scriptures—Jesus taught these two men about himself.

God gave us the scriptures so that we might know Jesus. People have been discovering Jesus for centuries in the Bible. The stories are endless:

Juergen Moltmann was a German foot-soldier during World War II. He grew up in a Christian home, but he had left faith behind. In 1945, he found himself defeated and imprisoned in a POW camp in Belgium. Germany lay in ruins. Moltmann was in utter despair. Then, one day, an American chaplain handed out English language New Testaments to these German prisoners—a seemingly futile gesture. But Young Moltmann read that New Testament, and in that prison—in his despair—Moltmann opened his heart to the Jesus whom he found on those pages. He says, "The Bible...rescued me from resignation and despair."

Forty years later, Moltmann was a famous theologian and university professor in Germany. He spoke to a group of American chaplains in Augsburg, telling them about the change that the Bible had made in his life. Then he pulled a New Testament from his vest pocket and showed it to the assembled chaplains. He told them that he had kept that New Testament near his heart for forty years, because through it he had found Jesus.

God gave us the scriptures so we could find Jesus there.

Julius Hickerson was a young doctor. He could have been very comfortable as a physician in this country, but felt a call to the mission field. He went to Columbia, where he served as a missionary for two years before his tragic death in a plane crash.

Sometime later, other missionaries went into the remote area where Hickerson's plane had crashed. They found that the natives were already Christians. When they asked them how they had learned about Jesus, the natives showed them a Bible in their language which they had retrieved from the wreckage of Hickerson's plane. Inside the cover, the missionaries found Hickerson's name. The natives had found Jesus in the scriptures.

God gave us the scriptures so we could find Jesus there.

And so Jesus used the scriptures—Moses and the prophets—to teach the two travelers about himself. Through the words of those Old Testament scriptures, they began to discover Jesus.

We too can discover Jesus in the scriptures. God gave us the Bible to help us to find Christ.

Then Jesus joined the two disciples for their evening meal. Luke says: "When (Jesus) sat down at the table with them, he took the bread and gave thanks. Breaking it, he gave to them. Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him" (verses 30 and 31 of our scripture lesson).

Listen again to these words: "He took the bread and gave thanks. Breaking it, he gave to them. Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him."

When I read those words, I was reminded of a story that Madeleine L'Engle tells about the evening that her husband, Hugh, proposed to her. Hugh had taken her to one of their favorite restaurants and had then taken her home. They talked about this and that. Hugh put on a recording of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*. Then he went to the bookshelf, and chose a book of poetry. He sat with Madeleine, and leafed through the book until he came to a poem by Conrad Aiken. Then he read these words to Madeleine: "Music I heard with you was more than music, and bread I broke with you was more than bread." And then Hugh asked Madeleine to marry him.

Don't you women wish that your husband had been so romantic! "Music I heard with you was more than music, and bread I broke with you was more than bread."

The bread Jesus shared with the two disciples in Emmaus was more than bread. Jesus "took the bread and gave thanks. Breaking it, he gave to them. Their eyes were opened, and they recognized him." The bread that Jesus broke with them was God's way of opening their eyes and hearts to see the risen Christ in their midst.

The bread that we break in our worship service is God's way of opening our eyes and hearts to see the risen Christ in our midst.

Jesus made himself known to the two disciples from Emmaus by the reading of scriptures and the breaking of bread. Jesus makes himself known to us today by the reading of scriptures and the breaking of bread.

We Christians have our roots in the reading of scriptures. The roots go all the way back to the Jewish synagogue, where they read the Law and the Prophets. The roots trace their way through two thousand years of Christian worship, where the scriptures have been read and expounded every Sunday. The roots thread their way through the lives of individual Christians like Juergen Moltmann whose lives were changed by the reading of scriptures. We have heard the reading of scripture Sunday after Sunday

to no effect, and then one day were surprised when they filled our hearts and brought tears to our eyes and transformed our lives.

We also have our roots in the breaking of bread. Those roots go all the way back to an Upper Room where Jesus broke bread with his disciples and told them that the bread was his body which was broken for them. Jesus invited his disciples to continue breaking bread together in remembrance of him. We do so even today, because at the Lord's Table we find Christ. The bread that we break with him is more than bread!

We need Christ! We live in a world that always has the potential to turn difficult. We make dozens of decisions every day, every one of which will affect the rest of our lives in ways great or small. We need help, and Christ can provide that help.

Our scripture lesson today raises the question, "How can we know Christ today—two thousand years after the resurrection. Its answer is simple. We find Christ in the reading of scripture and in the breaking of bread. Let us be a people of the Word and the Table so that we might rediscover the true Christ and allow him to be the Lord of our lives.

That's our Lord's message for this Lord's Day and I hope you got a blessing out of it!

Go out this week and be a blessing and be blessed. For the more you are a blessing, the more you will be blessed!

Thank you for watching and listening and we will see you all next week!

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