

Resurrection Road

Part 1: The Path of a Burning Heart

Luke 24:13-35

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Roads. They can be uphill or downhill. Paved or rough. Pointed toward fulfilling destinations or away from heartbreaking realities. Everyday finds us on one, heading toward one thing, leaving something else. Always traveling along with an incredible variety of baggage in our hearts: from delight to despair to disillusionment.

Two thousand years ago, two Middle Easterners were walking along a road from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus. Their sandals were dusty and their hearts were downcast. They were leaving a season of immense hope and fulfilled dreams which had been shockingly interrupted by a surprise arrest accompanied by trumped-up charges, a mockery of a trial and a brutal beating. The nightmare had culminated with a horrifying crucifixion.

Before they could even gather themselves and begin to comprehend the surreal events unfolding before their eyes, it was over. Finished. Air was sucked from their lungs, energy from their bodies and light from their eyes. Hopes were dashed and dreams were done. Hearts that had been engaged with life just a couple of days before were now numb and sluggish and grasping for some means of self-preservation.

The man whom they had thought was the One, the Messiah, was dead. Hadn't they seen him do the miracles, resurrect the dead and awaken their own hearts? It had all seemed so ... true. How could this have happened?! What now?!

A talkative stranger came up and joined them on their road. He appeared to be clueless about the events that had shattered their lives and suffocated their hearts. But over the next few hours, their suspicions of cluelessness were overshadowed by the cogent clarifications from Scripture given by this new companion on their path. Their suspicions are redirected from opinions about this stranger's awareness of current events to questions about his identity. And, finally, they realize ... it is *Him!* Jesus is really resurrected from the dead!

As we often emphasize here at Woodmen, when we refer to Easter, we're not talking about a celebration of the inauguration of Spring, hunting for multi-colored eggs or gobbling chocolate Easter bunnies. Nor are we merely acknowledging the resurrection of Christ's memory or influence or ideas. When we celebrate Easter, we're referring to Jesus Christ's bodily, historical and literal resurrection from the dead. We're referring to His resurrection that provides the hinge point and foundation for the credibility of historical Christianity ("*And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.*" 1 Corinthians 15:17). On a theological level, we are forever grateful for the fact that Christ's resurrection validates His identity and everything He taught and proclaimed. But we can also be deeply thankful for Easter's significance on a practical level—when it comes to the road we find ourselves on.

May today be a day in which you engage with the fact that Christ is really resurrected ... and with you on your road and in whatever reality that road represents ... waiting for you to recognize Him ... and listen to Him ... so He can set your heart afire!

