

Hanging Out with Jesus

“But we had hoped...”

Unedited Transcript

Luke 24:13-35

Well good morning. We actually had a second Tim Hawkins thing. Sorry about that. Maybe we'll show it next time. It's great to see you guys this morning. I want to give you a heads up, I'm going to do something different this morning than we have done in the past. We'll see how it works. It may be the last time we ever do it. You are going to come up with a big idea is morning. Not because I'm lazy, because I had a couple -I'm actually even going to show them to you. You're going to come up with a big idea.

We're going to get the end of the teaching and we're going to take a little break. Around the tables, we're going to give you three, four minutes to talk about it and then see who can come up with some big ideas. Then we're going to actually walk around with a microphone and collect those big ideas from the group. Then what we'll do is we'll throw those up in the slides. If you're watching this on the internet, you're going to get to see the different big ideas that the guys in the room came up with when you watch this on the internet as well. You help made this lesson even more powerful for the guys that are watching it online. I just wanted to let you now that we're going to do that.

Today we're talking about probably one of the most famous stories in the New Testament. If you have a bible, turn to Luke chapter 24. It's often called "the Walk to Emmaus", but I'm calling it "to Emmaus and back" because the Walk to Emmaus is important, but it's not the whole story. I'd even love you to start thinking about this when someone says "have you heard about the story about the walk to Emmaus?". You can say, "You mean the walk to Emmaus and back?" It's really important what happened at the end of this story. As we go through is passage, we're going to look at three parts to the passage this morning. We're going to talk about the first part of the passage which is about hopes dashed. The second part is about greater purposes being revealed. The third part is about our eyes being opened to those greater purposes and then what it causes us to do.

Let me pray for us and then we'll jump into this passage together. Father, we just ask, Lord, that you would send the Holy Spirit into the room this morning. Lord, that everyone that's here with us present, Father, would feel your presence, would feel your spirit speaking through your word, Lord. That everyone that's watching this, Lord, would have some time during the course of this lesson that something hits them in the heart, right where they need to hear it, Lord. Father, that you would use your holy scriptures to illuminate our lives, Lord. To change the way that we look at the word, so that we look at it in a way that's more consistent with your truth. You can use us to build your kingdom and bring you glory. In Jesus' name, Amen.

The walk to Emmaus and back is really a story that starts with disappointment. Pat Morley and others have said that all disappointment is the result of unmet expectations. All disappointment is the result of unmet expectations. Let me ask you. Who can relate to being disappointed? Anybody been disappointed? I was disappointed today on the way down here when the road was closed and I was trying to get here. That's a little disappointment. Who's had a big disappointment? I'm not going to ask you to share, but anyone had a big disappointment in your life? Three people are raising their hands. We've all had big disappointments in our life, right? We place our confidence in something that we really, really hoped for. We've made plans based on our expectations. We've envisioned a future. Then we had that moment when we realized that that thing that we had hoped for was not going to happen. Sometimes that can be crushing.

There's a scene in a movie that I love because I think it displays that moment of realization when your hopes are dashed. When the thing that you thought was going to happen, you realize is not going to happen. When maybe even the suppositions that you were basing your plans on turn out to be a lie. I'm going to show you this clip. It's from the movie Braveheart. If you're familiar with the story of Braveheart ... the movie Braveheart is a fictionalized account of William Wallis, who's fighting for the freedom of Scotland from England. You all know the movie Braveheart, right? The blue face paint

He's been allying the various clans of Scotland to fight against the English. There is another group of Scottish clans that are aligned with the English king. They are led by the Bruce family. William Wallis, part of his strategy is that he's going to get the Bruce family to switch their alliance from the English to the Scottish separatists. He has a meeting with man named Robert the Bruce and they strike up an agreement. They go into battle and he believes that Robert the Bruce and his clans that are collected under him are going to be on his side. This is going to turn the idea against the fight against the English. Then this is the moment that he finds out that he has been duped by Robert the Bruce. Let's watch this video together.

Can you see the look in his eyes when he realizes that everything he'd hoped for, everything he'd planned had been dashed? This thing that he based his entire life on, that he had worked so hard to accomplish, that he'd spent several years putting together, he lost his wife over this battle. At that moment that he thought that things were going to go his way, the moment that he thought that we was going to achieve his dream, it's just yanked out from under him.

Sixteen years ago I had some friends and we started a software company. Some of you have heard my story. I remember we spent the first year building this company up, me and five friends, or just six of us. For most of the first year we built the company up. Then we got some investors involved. We grew the company and money came in. We grew the company some more and some venture capitalists got involved. I remember the day that I was talking to one of the investment guys and he said ... We had done a million dollars the first year in business. He said, "How big do you think this company could be in three to five years?" Almost jokingly I said, "I could see 25-30 million." He went, "Yeah, that's what I was thinking too." I was like, "Wow. I just threw that number out there." This guys like, "Yeah, yeah." That became my focus. I'm going to build a \$25 million company.

The venture came in and the customers came in. We had 35 employees. Then the market crashed. We had gotten that first initial round of funding, but we needed really the second round of funding to go to that next level, to have built the company up to what it needed to be to service all these customers that were interested. The market crashed and all the money disappeared. That guy that told me that he thought \$25 million made sense, stopped answering his phone. We're in this slow spiral.

I remember this moment. This moment for me was we had a telephonic board meeting. We're on the phone with the board. We had 36 employees of the company at that point. I was going over the financials with the CEO at the time and with the board. A board member said, "We're not going to put" ... the board was our primary individual investors. Our board member said, "We just don't see that we can put any more cash into the company right now. How many employees can you support on your current cash flow?" We said, "Six." It was a Wednesday- they said, "By the end of the week you need to lay off 30 people."

First of all, I didn't want to lay off 30 people. Second of all, I felt like these people on the phone, at the time, why didn't they just put more money into it? We could get through this, we could weather the storm, I thought. Thirdly, I knew that if we did that, basically that it was just the beginning of the end. We weren't going to survive that. We had built up too many expectations. Hopefully my face didn't look like that, especially the blood part. I was just devastated. I was disappointed, and my hopes were dashed

We've all experienced disappointments like this. Let me tell you this, today I know that the best thing that ever happened to me, the greatest grace that God has ever shown me, was he crashed the stock market for me. He made it so that those venture capitalists couldn't put money into the company, because if he had it would have destroyed me. I don't think I'd be married today, I think my kids would be in college now and they would be people that I would have visit me on weekends. They may actually be calling somebody else dad. God's grace was bigger than my expectations. I think sometimes we underestimate God. I think often we underestimate God. We hope for less than he can accomplish. Then we're disappointed when we don't get it. We hope for less than he can accomplish, and then we're disappointed when we don't get what we had hoped for. That is a great synopsis of this story.

Look in your bibles at Luke 24, starting at verse 13. This story in Luke is about 15 or 20 verses, in Mark it's two verses. Basically, in Mark there's just the report of the two back to the 11. Luke has the whole story. I love the way Luke tells stories. If you read the gospels, each of the gospels is obviously different. Each one has a little bit different focus. I like Luke, because a lot of people say Luke's gospel reads almost like a legal brief. He's trying to establish facts. That's what I like about Luke. Let's read this passage. What I'm going to do is we're just going to walk through it together this morning.

"That very day is the day that Jesus rose from the dead. This is happening in the afternoon after the women have gone to the tomb and found the tomb empty. Peter and John have run to the tomb and found the tomb empty. Jesus has appeared to the women already." Now we're going to see him in this story. "That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They're walking seven miles. They were talking to each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. He said to them, 'What is this conversation that you're holding with each other as you walk?' They stood still looking sad."

Could you imagine you're one of these group of people that's been following Jesus around, you've been listening to him teach, you heard this message that he's giving of freedom from sin, of redemption, of liberation. You're living in a country that's occupied by a foreign power, by the Romans. They're taxing you and your people. They're limiting the way of your religious expression. Jesus came to many people, including many of his disciples, they thought he was going to end that. When they looked at Jesus, when they looked at the Christ, the Messiah, they thought, "Oh, this is awesome. I don't know how, but Jesus is going to end the Roman occupation." He rode in on the donkey the week before like a conquering king. The people looked at the prophecies in the Old Testament and then what they saw in the prophecies, the ones that they were looking at, as that the man that rode in on a donkey was their messiah, was their deliverer. They fundamentally misunderstood what that meant, because they saw it as a political savior, as a military savior, not really as a spiritual savior.

These guys are so disappointed when a stranger walks up to them. They're walking, they're walking from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus - it's seven miles away, 60 stadia, which is about seven miles away. They're spending a significant period of time walking out of Jerusalem, walking to Emmaus. They're just two buddies. "'I can't believe this. What are we going to do?' Jesus walks up to them and says, 'What are you guys talking about?' They are so sad that they just stop. They just stop and they stand still. They look at the stranger and they go, 'Are you serious? Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem that hasn't heard about this?'"

Remember, the crucifixion happened at the end of Passover week, so there's a ton of people in town. "'Are you the only person who came for the Passover and you haven't heard about what happened?' They stood still looking sad", verse 18. "Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him." Luke is good at this, he names Cleopas ... again, remember this is a little bit like a legal brief. He's making sure that there's an anchor, there's somebody that you can go check this out with. You can go find Cleopas. In the Jewish law at the time, you had to have two witnesses. We've got two guys here, and Cleopas and his friend who's not named. They both witness this together. It's a valid testimony.

"They stood still looking sad. Then one of them, Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the thing that have happened there in these days?' He said to them, 'What things?'" If you don't think Jesus had a sense of humor ... "They said to him, 'Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. How our chief priest and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. We have hoped ...'"

When I was on the phone with those board members and I'm thinking, "They're gutting my company." I had hoped I was going to build a big company. I had hoped I was going to move my family into a big house. I had hoped I wasn't going to have to worry about saving for college. I had hoped. We've all been there, right? We've all been at these moments in our life that our dreams, and our plans, and our ideas come crashing down around us. Hopefully we say this to God, they got to say it to Jesus, but often it we say it to ourselves or our friends, we just say, "I had hoped, I had so hoped." Understand that hope is not a pipe dream, hope is not - I've talked about this before - it's not fairy dust. It's like placing your confidence in something. It's assuming something's going to happen. It's a conviction. That's what hope is in the bible.

"We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." Yes, and besides all this, it's now the third day since these things have happened. "Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early this morning and when they did not find his body they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see. Some of the women with us, they said that the tomb was empty, they said that they saw these men that told them that Jesus had risen." It was women, their testimony's not valid. "Some of the men went to look and yeah the tomb was empty, but they didn't see anything else. We are devastated. What we had hoped for is not happening."

Verse 25: "And he said to them, 'Oh foolish ones. Slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." You see, this was the mistake that everybody had been making about Jesus, or that many people had been making about Jesus. They were only looking at the prophecies they liked. They were only looking at the prophesies that made them feel good about the conquering hero. They assumed he was going to vanquish the Romans.

Jesus was like, 'you didn't look at the whole thing, guys. I'm called the suffering servant.' Several times he told the disciples, "It is necessary that I die and rise again. If you want to follow me, you may have to die too. You're going to have to take up your cross and follow me." They didn't want to hear that part. You been there? I've done that. Somebody tells me everything but I only concentrate on the parts that I like, the parts that go along with the story that I want to be true. That's exactly what had happened with the disciples.

Jesus goes, "No, it's not just about conquering. You don't understand what conquering means. I had to suffer." They've got a long walk here. He goes through all the scripture, he goes through all the prophesies with them. One by one he lays it out to them. Verse 28: "They drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he was going farther. They urged him strongly saying, 'stay with us, for it is towards evening and the day is now far spent.'" He went in to stay with them.

Here's a little cultural note: what happens here is actually culturally polite. What a traveler is supposed to do when you're travelling with people and they get to where they're going, is you're supposed to say, "It was nice travelling with you, I'm going to keep going." They're supposed to say, "No, no, no, don't keep going. It's late, come in and eat with us, come in and stay with us." That's that Middle Eastern culture of hospitality. This is exactly this is supposed to happen. Jesus isn't lying. It says he acted as if he was going to go on. That was the way that you did that.

They invite him in. He comes in. It says, "When he was at the table with them he took the bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognized him." There's what happens: Jesus, as they're walking on the road, he's revealing, guys there's greater purposes than you think. This is not about a political conquest, this is not about overcoming injustice in the current time. This is about redemption of the world. This is about the forgiveness of sins. Not just your sins, but actually overcoming sin. My people aren't just the Jews, my people are everybody that follows me." As he gives them the biggest picture, he reveals the greater purposes and then their eyes are opened.

As soon as they recognize him, he disappears. Doesn't that just beat all? Would you be like, "Wait a second, come on, man. We just figured this all out." As soon as they had what they needed, he left them. They had to figure out what to do next. This is the big part here. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?" The language here is actually "didn't we feel warm inside as he was talking to us, physically?" "They rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together saying, 'The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told what had happened on the road and how he was shown to them in the breaking of the bread." They go back and they tell the disciples the story. In Mark they don't believe him. They don't believe them in Mark. What happens next - this is probably next week - he shows up again. Now they believe them.

Guys, when we're in this position, when our hopes are dashed and then Jesus shows up and he shows us a better way. When my company started to disintegrate, Jesus showed up. He showed up in the form of a different six friends. I had started the company with five or six friends, and a different five or six friends showed up. They were brothers of mine from my church. As I'm going through this debacle, this devastating loss, I get a phone call from a friend. He says, "Come join a small group." I don't want to join a small group. I want to sit in my misery. I want to feel sorry for myself. "Come join our small group." In those five or six friends Jesus showed up. He rescued me from my crappy expectations that would have ruined me. He showed me a better way.

We read a book. I had never heard of the book before. It was called The Man in the Mirror. You heard of it? Didn't know anything about Pat. We're into the book six months and one of the guys goes ... because at this point the company's about to go out of business no; we lasted for several months. My friend says, "If you need a job, I think Pat Morley's looking for somebody." I'm holding the book in my hand. I'm like, "Pat Morley, I've heard that name somewhere before. You mean this guy?" Of course I'm holding up the picture of the guy with the towel and the tasseled hair on the cover. He goes, "That's not him. He's on the back." On the back of the book it says, "Patrick Morley, author of a gazillion books leads a bible study in Winter Park, Florida." I had never read that.

The next thing I know, I'm sending a resume to Pat and getting a phone call from David Delk and coming and talking about a Job. God had a better way. Now what do I do? Now one of the things I get to do, is I get to go tell guys about how I almost destroyed my life by having low expectations and trying to start a company that was going to make me a million dollars, or whatever. God had a better way. He shows up. Don't set your expectations of God too low, guys. Don't set your expectations of God too low.

That's the story of the walk to Emmaus and back. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to take a couple minutes and I want you to come up with some big ideas. I'm going to prime the pump a little bit. Here's a couple of ideas that might just prime the pump. One might be, in my greatest disappointment Jesus gives me the biggest surprises. In my greatest disappointment Jesus gives me the biggest surprises. Here's another one: faith equals knowledge plus understanding plus action. See, the disciples knew the prophecies, but they didn't understand them. Jesus helped them understand them, but even that wasn't enough. They needed to take action. They needed to go back and tell the other disciples.

We're going to take about three or four minutes. Just going to talk at your tables. Don't do the discussion questions yet. Maybe even turn your papers over. I want you to all around the table, see if you can come up with a big idea. Then we're going to come back, Jim's going to walk around with a microphone and we're going to collect a few of them. Go ahead, take about three or four minutes. Come up with your own big idea. I going to give you one more minute or 45 seconds to coalesce. Try to grab one idea from your table. Grab one idea from your table and then Jim and I are going come around in just a minute. Who's got a big idea from their table? Just raise your hand and Jim's going to run over to you like Oprah with the microphone. Raise your hand. Who's got it? All right, right up here.

Speaker 2: Jesus offers much more than we can hope for.

Brett Clemmer: Jesus offers much more than we can hope for. Good job. That was a good one. I saw one over here.

Speaker 3: Let's see, Jesus has a better plan for your life than you thought you did. Jesus leads us to what is really important.

Brett Clemmer: Very good. Give him a hand. That was great. Over there. You got one?

Speaker 4: Yeah, I've got one here. Somebody read it. Who's going to read this?

Speaker 5: I'm not going to read all five. I'm going to pick mine. When all is lost, grace abounds.

Brett Clemmer: When all is lost, what?

Speaker 4: Grace abounds.

Brett Clemmer: When all is lost, grace abounds. Good. We've got one more here.

Speaker 6: Even the bad things in our lives today has a positive impact in the future if we put our faith and hope in the scriptures.

Brett Clemmer: Awesome. Great. One more, let's do one more. Who's got one more? I'm sorry.

Speaker 7: We have two. Hoop stash ... God's grace is bigger. Then, my way is not his way.

Brett Clemmer: Excellent, good job guys.

Speaker 4: David's got one more.

Brett Clemmer: One more, last one.

Speaker 8: To recognize Jesus is to recognize who he really is.

Excellent. To recognize Jesus is to recognize who he is really is. Fantastic. Good job guys. Give yourselves a hand. That was fantastic. Let me close with this. This is a quote from Hudson Taylor that we use around the office a fair amount. It's this: "Many Christians estimate difficulties in light of their own resources, and thus attempt little and fail at the little that they do attempt. All God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God because they reckoned on his power and presence to be with them." Guys, if you are feeling like the world is falling apart around you, like your hopes are dashed, I want you to take heart, Jesus is alive. He is the redemption of those who are called by his name. His power is greater than death. He has a plan bigger than you can comprehend right now. He will walk with you and he will reveal to you what you need to know. Have faith.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for the story of these faithful disciples. Men who struggled with their disappointment, Lord. Yet were ready when you showed up to hear the truth. Father, thank you that they were hospitable to the Son. That they wanted Jesus to stay with them, that they listened to him, Lord. Jesus, thank you for opening their eyes. Thank you, Lord, for the promise that that is to us. That you will reveal to us exactly what we need to know. To strengthen our faith. Lord, give us the resolve to live our lives in a way that shows people that we believe that you were alive. Father, I ask that you give us strength in the days ahead so that we can build your kingdom and bring you glory. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.