



**Christ at Emmaus, Rembrandt (1654) The Louvre, Paris**

*Downloaded from <https://rembrandt.louvre.fr/>*

Luke's account of the journey on the road to Emmaus is a beautifully crafted account of two early disciples, Cleopas and his friend, walking together in dejection after all their hopes in Jesus had been dashed. Jesus, who had promised so much, was dead; now even his body had gone. A stranger joins them and, no doubt sensing their despair, asks them what they had been discussing. He listens and then puts their account into its scriptural context, gently chiding them:

*How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!*

Perhaps grateful for his company and intrigued by the power and clarity of his scriptural exposition they invite him to join them at the inn as night is coming.

First we may marvel at the disciples' failure to recognise Jesus as He walked and talked beside them and then go on to share their sense of wonder as the truth dawns on them as Jesus broke bread and gave thanks. Finally, we see how they respond to this revelation - by going to tell others about it.

Most of the great masters of European art have depicted one or other aspect of this story. The most memorable works are probably those which depict the moment of revelation as Jesus breaks bread, of which Rembrandt's is one of the finest examples. Some artists choose to illustrate the scene as the three men walked together towards Emmaus. What I have not yet found is any depiction of the disciples dashing back in the failing light in order to tell the Eleven.

Yet each of the three scenes is significant.

The journey on the road is as an example of the transition from spiritual darkness to enlightenment, from despair to faith and it ends with the spontaneous invitation of the disciples to Jesus to come and stay with them, just as the Christian will invite Jesus into their life.

Revelation and recognition come through the simple act of breaking bread. It is reminder of the power of symbolic action, sometimes more effective than even the most carefully chosen words. This scene is often regarded as the first re-enactment of the Last Supper. In the foreground of Rembrandt's painting we see an empty space in the foreground. We can take this as an invitation for us to occupy whenever we celebrate the Lord's Supper. As we do so may we sense the fresh and vivid excitement of those two disciples.

But there is another scene. The story ends with a response; the immediate return to Jerusalem to share the good news. That final scene is a model of faith leading to action. Whether we see our faith rooted in, and best nourished by, Word or Sacrament, we are challenged to take action.

## Silence, Prayer, And Communion Ending 9.30 a.m.

### Silence

### Prayer

*But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.  
(Luke 24:29 in the KJV)*

**Abide with us Lord, throughout this day.  
Abide with us in our journeying, and in our homes.  
Abide with us in our seeking, and in our longings.  
Abide with us now and to eternity, Jesus, risen Lord,  
who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit  
in glory for ever. Amen**

*They stood still, their faces downcast (Luke 24:17b)*

Pray for those who are  
Sad or lonely,  
sick, or bereaved,  
unable to cope,  
or who have suffered broken relationships.

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Heavenly Father we pray that your church will walk alongside the downcast and troubled and help to reveal your love and presence to those who need it most.

Loving Lord, abide with us

**And we will abide in you**

*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. (Luke 24:27)*

Pray for  
diligence in reading scripture,  
greater understanding of what we read, and  
the humility to recognise that there are things we do not yet understand.

and for  
those who teach or preach  
those who struggle in faith or  
who look on without understanding

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Heavenly Father we pray that your church will walk alongside people at all stages on their journey of faith, helping them along the path of greater understanding of your love for them.

Loving Lord, abide with us

**And we will abide in you**

*Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him (Luke 24:31)*

Give thanks for those who have helped us to grow in faith or understanding

Pray that we may share in that sense of wonder  
in worship  
in prayer  
in fellowship

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Heavenly Father, help us to see you in those we meet, whether in our homes, in our friendships or in our worship and as we do so may it fill us with joy and wonder.

*They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem.*

Give us the courage to proclaim  
to speak of our faith with sensitivity and sincerity  
to speak out for what is right and just and godly, especially when it is easier to say nothing.

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Heavenly Father we pray that we and all your church will proclaim the good news of the risen Lord Jesus with courage and authority.

Loving Lord, abide with us  
**And we will abide in you**

*Together:*

**God of glory,  
by the raising of your Son  
you have broken the chains of death and hell:  
fill your Church with faith and hope;  
for a new day has dawned  
and the way to life stands open  
in our Saviour Jesus Christ.**

**And**

*Please stay for the communion even if not taking the bread and wine. You can come to the rail for a blessing (a brief prayer) – simply carry this sheet.*

**Communion**

*A moment to reflect on the times when we have not been loyal to God and His ways and have not cared for others.*

In God's holy presence we call to mind our need for forgiveness.

*Silence*

*We say together:*

**Father, our sin has brought you sorrow,  
has harmed those who share our life,  
has been hurtful to ourselves.  
We dare not say we have only lightly sinned;  
Yet Christ has taken to himself the burden of it all.**

In Jesus' name may we be freed from the penalty and power of sin. **Amen.**

God of love and wonder, we sing your praises: with the great company of people, past and present, here and everywhere. We adore you, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

You are indeed holy, eternal God and Father;  
in love greater than we can imagine you gave your only Son,  
that everyone who has faith in him may not die but have eternal life.

Not as we would, but as we are able, we praise and thank you  
for the reality of his birth, the glory of his humanity, the generosity of his life:  
for his sacrifice on the cross, the wonder of his resurrection,  
and the assurance that he lives for ever to save us;  
for the gift of the Holy Spirit, for our calling to be his people,  
for the hope all can find in him.

*We say together:*

**Remembering his life and sacrifice  
we now come to his table  
as he has invited us to do.  
Send to us now, we pray, the Holy Spirit  
so that we may indeed be your people,  
and that as we share the bread and wine  
we may share in the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Amen**

These are the gifts of God  
for the people of God.

*Please come to the rail now.*

### **Ending**

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:  
**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.  
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

*A post-communion prayer, said together:*

**God of truth,  
we have seen with our eyes  
and touched with our hands the bread of life:  
strengthen our faith  
that we may grow in love for you  
and for each other;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

### *The blessing*

God the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,  
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life. **Amen.**  
God the Son, who in bursting the grave has won a glorious victory,  
give you joy as you share the Easter faith. **Amen.**  
God the Holy Spirit, whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples,  
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace. **Amen**  
And the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen**

*The next SPACE service will be on Wednesday April 17<sup>th</sup>*

## On the Road to Emmaus

<sup>13</sup> Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles<sup>[a]</sup> from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup> As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; <sup>16</sup> but they were kept from recognizing him.

<sup>17</sup> He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still, their faces downcast. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

<sup>19</sup> “What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup> but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. <sup>22</sup> In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup> but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

<sup>25</sup> He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

<sup>33</sup> They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together <sup>34</sup> and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” <sup>35</sup> Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.