

Introductory

This material is exclusive to Luke. It is the appointed text for Easter Monday in TLH, which means that it had almost never been a reading on Sunday until recently. Yet because of that one painting and because it has been taught all along in Sunday School, it is a familiar story to most American Christians. LW and LSB appoint it to be read on Easter 3, series A.

The first paragraph, and often the first sentence of a short story will describe the context in which the story takes place, or at least where it will begin. You will also find that the main character or characters in the story are often introduced early on. These things are important and fundamental, so we know who the story is about and where it is located.

Are we in Faulkner's Mississippi, or are we in Clancy's Moscow? Is the time the Middle Ages, or are we in the future? Are the major players Chinese spies, or are they Iowa farmers? Luke is relating to us the true story of an incident that begins on a road, goes to a house in Emmaus, then to Jerusalem. Characters enter the story line early, others later.

When preaching on things that happened as recorded in the Bible, set the scene for the reader. On this Sunday especially, it would be a good idea to review the timeline; those who go to the tomb go to the tomb, and then "two of them" headed for Emmaus. Along the way they encounter Jesus, who encounters them, He is deliberately engaging them.

Later on that evening we have the incident behind closed doors and windows described in last week's text – always on Easter 2 – then the appearance of Jesus as recorded right after this reading. That reading will be read next Sunday, and you may want to make reference to that this Sunday, perhaps tease next Sunday's reading like they tease things on TV.

Though it will fade with time, the joy and excitement of Easter will still be there for Christians this week and during the entire Season. Your manner and preaching should communicate that joy and excitement to them. The way the two men talk to Jesus about Jesus is at least mildly humorous. It reminds me of chapter seventeen in *That One Book*.

Good preaching takes the text of things that were said and done a long time ago and in a faraway land and makes them understandable and applicable to people in our time and place. The application of this incident to our time and place is "the breaking of bread," where we see with as much certainty as those two men on the road the risen Christ.

Jesus is walking beside these two people, and they did not know who He was. Even when He started reading to them from the Bible, they did not know who He was. It was only in "the breaking of bread," the same place that we today see Him, that they recognized Jesus. Luke makes sure to essentially repeat v. 31 in the men's retelling of the incident (v. 35).

The term “breaking bread” has come down to us in the vernacular, and when we use the phrase, it means that we are going to dine together. When Luke uses that term, here and twice in the second chapter of Acts (42, 46), he means a specific and particular mode of dining together; the Sacrament of the Altar. It’s a lucan term, not used by other NT writers.

Every speaker and every writer have favorite words and phrases, and a lot of people have some that are exclusive to the individual. Rush Limbaugh’s listeners are familiar with the way he talks, and so are Jim Rome’s. So are mine and yours. I will often use the phrase “I know what you’re thinking” followed by words, or “meanwhile, back at the ranch.”

Jesus seems to like “you have heard it said” and “the Kingdom of heaven in like” followed by words. People who don’t believe correctly about the Sacrament make the case that Luke is just talking about a meal. The idea that Luke means the Sacrament when he speaks of “breaking bread” is not a matter of opinion or conjecture, but a matter of language.

Textual Notes

13. Having given his Easter Sunday morning account, Luke calls the actual characters in the true story “δύο ἐξ αὐτῶν – two of them,” and we ask, “two of whom?” He has just been talking about “the Apostles” (v. 11), so “them” would be the Apostles. Later, we find out that one of the two is named Cleopas, who happens to be on the list of Seventy Apostles.

Luke makes sure that we know that it was on “ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ – that very day” – the First Easter – that this incident took place. He tells us that two disciples were going to Emmaus, not Galilee, and he tells us that it is “σταδίους ἐξήκοντα – sixty stadia” from Jerusalem to there. Variant texts add “hundred,” making it “one hundred sixty stadia.”

Likely a copyist not familiar with palestinian geography changed it, making it a longer walk, but why? Like the cubit, the distance indicated by the unit of measurement known as the “στάδιον” can vary with time and place. The word is the etymological ancestor of our word “stadium,” and the distance of the στάδιον was roughly the distance of a race.

Moulton Milligan gives several conversions for στάδιον, including those used by Jews and Roman, but since Luke is writing to the Greeks, it seems to me that we ought to use the unit of measurement used by the Greeks of that day; in that time and place, a στάδιον was about 185 meters. Let’s do the math; 60 stada x 185 m = 11,200 m, or roughly 6.9 miles.

When we search Google Maps for Emmaus, Israel, she takes us to Abu Ghosh, and tells us that it’s 13.5 K from there to Jerusalem. Translated into English, that’s 7.9 miles, depending on where you start in the Holy City. In directing us how to journey from Jerusalem to Abu Ghosh, you may enter that place from the east on Emmaus Street.

There is generally a reason why certain locations are given certain names. Jenny Redman Road in rural Sherrard is named after a farmer. The first bridge across the Mississippi was located at Bridge Street in Davenport. Rock Island was originally just that. The Swedish Pilgrimage Site Andover, IL is named after the Hampshire, UK town of that same name.

Location names, once given, are notoriously intransigent. Historians write about the siege of Leningrad and the Battle of Stalingrad, two cities known before the USSR and today as St. Petersburg and Volgograd. When place names do change, it most often is about matters of a social or political nature. Aquinnah, MA changed its name from Gay Head in 1997.

Likely, Emmaus Street in Abu Ghosh went from there to Emmaus, a stone's throw down the road to the east. DeWitt Street in Grand Mound – today just another residential street in a small town in Iowa – went to that town four miles to the east. Use local streets, roads, and towns from your neck of the woods to communicate to your hearers the location of Emmaus.

14. While these two, who were not of the twelve, traveled along the road, they debriefed, “αὐτοὶ ὁμιλοῦν πρὸς ἀλλήλους – talking with each other” about recent happenings in those parts. This verb “ὁμιλέω – to talk” occurs only four times in the NT, all in Luke: here, 15, Acts 20:11 and 24:26, and it indicates not small talk, but some very serious discussion.

The lexicons and the ASV seem to like the word “commune,” and I'm not sure why. The subject of their serious discussion is said to be “τῶν συμβεβηκότων τούτων – all the things that have happened.” The verb is the perfect active participle form of συμβαίνω, a relatively rare form that indicates that they were trying to put some things together. I'll bet they were.

Maybe I do know why the ASV and lexicons use the word “commune” to translate the verb that indicates having a serious conversation. The faithful exegete is going to see that the walkers will “commune” with Him in Emmaus when they recognized Him “in the breaking of the bread.” The others will act like Holy Communion did not even happen at Emmaus.

The Protestants see Christian communion as something between believers, and it's done when they get together and “fellowship” with one another. The importance of the Sacrament is that it causes people to gather together, to “commune” and have “fellowship” with one another. So, to them, the walkers were already communing together by just being together.

In Acts (2:42), Luke tells us that when the first Christians got together for Divine Service, they “devoted themselves to the Apostles' teaching (readings and preaching) ...prayer,” and “κοινωνία, τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου – fellowship, the breaking of bread.” That noun and that phrase stand in apposition to one another; they are one in the same thing. Duckduckgo say,

Apposition – A construction in which a noun or noun phrase is placed with another as an explanatory equivalent, both having the same syntactic relation to the other elements in the sentence; for example, *Copley* and *the painter* in *The painter Copley was born in Boston*.

That means that Luke saw The Sacrament as the primary, if not the only expression of Christian “fellowship.” A lot of Christians are quite haphazard in the way they throw around that term “fellowship.” It means a lot of things to a lot of people, and the Lutherans will even talk about going to the Fellowship Hall, a place where the Sacrament is never found.

15. It had been sort of a crazy week, and now an even crazier weekend for them. As they were walking, two other verbs are used to describe the content of their discussion; " ὁμιλεῖν αὐτοὺς καὶ συνζητεῖν – they talked and reasoned" both present active infinitive verbs. They were really into it, talking with one another and discussing or even arguing with each other.

We met the first verb ὁμιλέω (talked) in the previous verse. The second verb occurs nine other times in the NT, and is used to describe serious discussion, two men using logic, the science of correct thinking, to come to some sort of consensus on what just happened here. As has been the case for the last two Sundays, this material was to them a very new thing.

The OT teaches and talks in a general way about resurrection, and as far as goes the natural man, he generally thinks his life will continue after this one ends. The Egyptians believed that bodies would be brought back to life, and if *The Vikings* has taught us anything about Vikings, it's that they believe in the afterlife and Valhalla is the preferred place to spend it.

It's one thing to talk about that, and it's another thing to believe in it, and it's yet another thing to actually see it personalized; an actual man – they probably knew Him, probably well – had died, and He had really, undoubtably been dead. Confronted with news of the absent body...well, we don't hear, “He is Risen! He is Risen, Indeed! Alleluia!” do we.

Mark uses that second verb (reasoned) a lot, often in the context of Jesus doing something of a supernatural nature. In the ninth chapter (v. 10), they come down from Transfiguration Mount, and Jesus tells them to keep this under their hat until He is resurrected from the dead, they are among themselves “questioning what the rising from the dead meant.”

As they were walking along, they find that " αὐτὸς Ἰησοῦς ἐγγίσας συνεπορεύετο αὐτοῖς – Jesus Himself, having drawn near, is journeying with them.” The verb is an aorist active participle, and it suggests that this was not a chance encounter, but that Jesus deliberately made it happen. Why? So that what Luke tells us happens at Emmaus would happen.

What happens next reminds you of the time when Tom, Huck and Joe Harper attended their own funeral in Hannibal, MO. Jesus was there, they were looking at Him, they are about to eulogize Him, but they didn't know it was Him. Luke tells us that “οἱ δὲ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν ἐκρατοῦντο τοῦ μὴ ἐπιγνῶναι αὐτόν – their eyes were held, so that they did not know Him.”

That verb is often used when speaking of somebody grabbing or seizing something with the hands, and the imperfect tense indicates continuous action. The passive mood leaves unsaid the subject holding the eyes because it doesn't have to be said, because it is obvious. They will see God when God wants them to see God, and they will not see Him a moment before.

17. And Jesus goes, " Τίνες οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι οὓς ἀντιβάλλετε πρὸς ἀλλήλους περιπατοῦντες – what are these words that you are throwing back and forth." The verb is the present active

of ἀντιβάλλω, a hapax in the NT. The word is a compound of the words “instead of” and “throw.” It means they are “throwing back and forth” to one another words and sentences.

MM cites the word being used in the context of fitting stones together in a wall. You can almost hear the men tossing ideas back and forth, thesis and antithesis, using their reason, trying to put together the events of Holy Week and to make some sense of it. We have all seen, heard, and participated in conversations like this, and tell that to your listeners.

When Jesus speaks, the two men "ἑστάθησαν σκυθρωποί – stand sadly." It means that the men had been walking, and at the word of Jesus, they stopped walking. The word “sadly” occurs here in Luke and only one other time in the NT, in Matthew (6: 16), when Jesus talks about the look of those who are fasting and want everybody to know about it.

18. Cleopas is now named as one of the two walkers. The name is a shortened and masculinized form of "Cleopatros," like the feminized part famously played by Elizabeth Taylor. It means "glory of the father." Orthodox WIKI has him fourth of The Seventy, and it says that he was the Bishop of Jerusalem. WIK says that his son was the Bishop.

WIK footnotes a commentary from 1890 where "They argue that Alphaeus is the Greek form of the Hebrew Cleophas; that Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and the mother of James and Joses (Mark 15)..." The evidence is not entirely satisfactory that Alphaeus and Cleophas are the same name." He does not have a day on the LCMS Lutheran calendar.

There is a certain irony in the words that Cleopas now speaks to Jesus. He assumes that Jesus is "παροικεῖς – to dwell beside", a foreigner visiting Jerusalem. Robertson (WP) and Reinicker (RNK) both see connotations of the idea of aloneness or of Jesus being the "only" one, who is not like the rest. We might have asked if He was from another planet.

BAG says specifically of this verse that we have here "a rhetorical use...someth. like are you the only one so strange in Jerusalem?" The word appears twice in the NT: here and in Hebrews 11 of Abraham, when it talks about how he "sojourned" in Palestine, "as in a foreign land." That's what Cleopas calls the Creator of all this, and we can get that.

Continuing, Cleopas asked Jesus if He was the only one who "καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσ τὰ γενόμενα ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις – does not know what has been happening these days" in Jerusalem. Everybody was talking about Jesus, especially among the Jewish community, especially around here. How could this man not know what everybody else knows?

If we ever thought that Jesus lacked a sense of humor, the conversation that follows with these two men ought to dispel us of that notion. Our Lord, having been dead, is enjoying life. Knowing full well exactly what the men are talking about, He asks them “Ποῖα – what things?” and they say His name. I think Jesus was a funny guy; ha-ha funny.

Not funny funny. Then they distinguish Him from other men named Jesus by saying the name of His hometown and call Him "δυνατὸς ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ λόγῳ – a mighty prophet in

works and in word.” The adjective "mighty" or "powerful" modifies the noun "prophet," not the works and the word. A lot of our contemporaries would say the same thing.

Cleopas notes that neither the things done, nor the things said by Jesus were in secret, but it all played out “ἐναντίον τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ – in front of God and The People.” The first word of that phrase occurs only five times in the NT, all by Luke's pen, and expresses things done openly for all to see. The last word refers to the Jewish nation.

20. He then relates to Jesus how Jesus had been παρέδωκαν – handed over" by their religious " εἰς κρίμα θανάτου – into a judgment of death," and “ἐσταύρωσαν αὐτόν – they crucified Him.” We note that the subject of all those verbs are religious leaders, not Pilate or the Romans. The NT writers consistently lay Jesus' death at their, not Roman feet.

Cleopas, knowing full well that Pilate and the Romans had done the actual killing, rightly put the responsibility for it on their own people. Peter does the same thing today in Acts, and Stephan emphatically blames them for what happened to Jesus, which led to his stoning. I am mildly disturbed by preachers' hesitancy to say things like that.

But I think we have to say it. The last Jesus docudrama I watched has the Sanhedrin pronouncing Jesus “not guilty” and Pilate wanting Him to be crucified as part of some sort of conspiracy. I didn't understand just exactly what the conspiracy was, but that's talking heads for you. When they don't know what they're talking about, they say words.

They say words that are intended to communicate to the hearer that I'm a lot smarter than you; in fact, I'm so smart that you can't even understand what I'm saying, that's how smart I am. I have also heard preaching like that. My latest attempt to avoid using the obvious word to state the obvious is to call the people of Jesus' ethnic makeup “Hebrews.”

21. He then relates to Jesus that “ἠλπίζομεν ὅτι αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ μέλλων λυτροῦσθαι τὸν Ἰσραήλ – we had been hoping that He is the one to ransom Israel.” The first verb is in the imperfect tense, continuous action, and the second is a perfect infinitive, emphasis on the connection between the actor and the act; the doer and the deed, Jesus The Redeemer.

Using an emphatic " ἀλλά – but" they then relate to Jesus that it has been three days since Jesus died, and that their hope is quickly fading. They are discouraged and disappointed, to say the least. We later find out that they had heard the news of the empty tomb, but that was not sufficient; they seem to think Him still dead, or something. They are discussing.

22. Another emphatic ἀλλά – but," and the man is starting to sound like two Lutheran pastors discussing Law and Gospel. The buts are a picture of the verb ἀντιβάλλω, used earlier to describe the nature of their talking. They are genuinely conflicted, and genuinely trying to put it all together, like when something happens that has never happened before.

He relates how " γυναῖκες τινες ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξέστησαν ἡμᾶς, γενόμεναι ὀρθριναὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μνημεῖον – certain women out of us astonished us" with news “from the tomb.” Either

they were there on Easter Sunday when Mary and the other women brought news of the empty tomb, or they heard it second-hand from people who heard it from them.

My inclination, and the most simple reading, is that they were there when the women brought news of the empty tomb. If Cleopas is one of the Seventy – and likely so was the unnamed companion – then it is entirely possible, maybe likely, that they were there in the locked room. To be sure, the Twelve were there, but maybe so were others as well.

John calls those others “disciples.” Four times (19, 25, 26, 30) in the twentieth chapter John places “disciples” in the room with the Twelve. As we read through this narrative, it becomes clear that Cleopas and his companion are not just two guys who have heard stuff, but are indeed very close to the situation, and they do in fact have a dog in this fight.

23. It is noteworthy that he does not say “the woman said the body was gone,” or something like that. He says “μὴ εὐροῦσαι τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἦλθον λέγουσαι – having not found the body, they came to us, speaking.” The women were saying, “ὅπτασίαν ἀγγέλων ἑώρακέναι, οἱ λέγουσιν αὐτὸν ζῆν – to have seen a revelation of angels, who say ‘He is alive.’”

What does that mean? On a very basic level, it means that they heard it from the women, who had heard it from some angels, which is nothing like an eyewitness account. It means that the women who had told them had not actually seen anything. By this time, Mary had actually seen Him, but apparently either she didn’t tell them, or they didn’t listen to her.

Paul says to the Corinthians (2 12:1) that he wanted to tell them about his ἑώρακέναι, but what good would that do, and then he goes third person and tells them about his visions. What he then describes certainly sounds supernatural. When Zechariah exited the Temple following his encounter with an angel, the people perceived that he had seen ἑώρακέναι.

24. Cleopas then goes on to relate to Jesus how some of them – he doesn’t say if he was one of them – went with them to the tomb. When they got there, he says, " εὗρον οὕτως καθὼς καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες εἶπον, αὐτὸν δὲ οὐκ εἶδον – we found it so, as also the women said, we didn’t see Him. So Cleopas and probably his unnamed companion had seen what they saw.

The two adverbs and the conjunction that follows them in the middle of the sentence make the meaning to be something like our saying; "it was just like they said it was." But they didn't see Jesus. Do we detect that the two do not seem to think it surprising or out of the ordinary that the body of Jesus is no longer in the tomb? Still tossing ideas back and forth.

Perhaps the story their bosses had told the Temple guards to spread – and bribed them to make sure of its spreading – the one about how His disciples came and took His body while they were sleeping (Mt 28) – has gotten to them and they maybe thought it to be true. If the guards were paid to tell the story, we would think that they got right at that straightaway.

25. The irritation we now hear in the voice of Jesus is in all likelihood due to the fact that He had called His shot on several occasions, telling the Twelve at least – maybe the Seventy – that He would be crucified, but that He would rise after three days, and three days are up, and Cleopas and The Other Guy too have seen the empty tomb, and yet...

He calls them " ἀνόητοι καὶ βραδεῖς τῇ καρδίᾳ τοῦ πιστεῦειν – foolish and slow of the heart to believe" the teaching of the OT and His words. The word for "foolish" is not the common "ἄορον," a word that speaks to the character of a person, a negative term often juxtaposed with the antonym "wise." Mainstream translations all say "fool" or "foolish."

Perhaps "dunderhead" or "stupid." The word here speaks to one's inability to get one's head around something that the head should be gotten around. Robertson thinks that the term "slow of heart" is an "old word for one dull, slow to comprehend or act" – WP. But what He actually criticizes here is their refusal to believe what the OT said about this.

Probably the clearest OT about Resurrection in general is Job's "I will see Him in the flesh." The widow's son was raised from the dead, and several passages in Daniel, Ezekiel, Isaiah et al speak very clearly of a belief in the Resurrection. Besides that, Jesus had raised the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow at Nain, and then there was Lazarus as well.

You could even say that Jesus rising from the dead ought to be the most unsurprising and easily understood thing ever. Speaking generally, the concept of resurrection is not unknown in the theological world of the Natural Man. Speaking specifically and logically, the idea that God would be killed and then remain dead does not make much sense.

What's the alternative? He stays in the grave like every other religious leader and false messiah? Did you really expect God to stay dead? To see what that looks like in fiction, check out *Skeleton in God's Closet* by Paul Maier. The fictional finding of the remains of Jesus sent the Christian world into a tizzy, and it's a pretty good read, \$7.99 Kindle

Or as Jesus puts it rhetorically, "οὐχὶ ταῦτα ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν Χριστὸν καὶ εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ – were not these things necessary, for the Christ to suffer, and to enter into His glory?" The question – rhetorical or not – that begins with οὐχὶ expects a positive response (FGG 281). It's the same language – including δει – He has used to call that shot.

Entering into His glory is synecdoche for things like the Resurrection, the Ascension, and I suppose you could count those forty days appearing to people alive as glory. And the Second Coming, which has yet to come. The bad thing of crucifixion had to happen first, and then comes those good things. So the Christian suffers bad and death first, then heaven.

27. Having invoked the OT prophets and Himself, He now begins with Genesis and continues through the entire OT, "διερμήνευσεν αὐτοῖς ἐν πάσαις ταῖς γραφαῖς τὰ περὶ ἑαυτοῦ – He explained to them in all the writings the things about Himself." Some of the translations use the word "interpret" to describe what Jesus is doing here, but don't do that.

The word "interpret" indicates that the reader is putting his own thoughts and ideas into the text, like the Reformed. Jesus would never do that, nor should we. We do eisegesis, which Seminary taught us means "to draw the meaning out of the text." Nobody cares what you or anybody else think about the text; they just care about what it actually says and means.

If this journey was one of roughly seven miles, then it would have been made in an hour, two at the most, depending on how fast they walked. Among the arts and technologies lost to modern man is the method of covering great distances in short time by walking. Until very recent times, walking was the mode of transportation for the great majority of people,

They were pretty good at it, and fast. When my family and I ride bikes on a nice, smooth-surfaced bike trail, we do about seven miles per hour. WIK says that modern man walks at an average of 3.1 mph. A good walker can, and in former times did, easily do on foot what we do on a bicycle. On the trail, often the runners will overtake us on our bikes.

People who talk about walking and walkers in colonial times describe their methodology of walking as one of almost throwing oneself forward and landing on one leg, then the next. If you've ever Cross Country skied, you know that if you are using proper form, you are doing just that, and in fact modern Nordic Walking is sometimes called Ski Walking.

28. As they approached the yet to be named village, Jesus " προσεποιήσατο πορρώτερον πορεύεσθαι – acted like He was going further." The first word is a hapax in the NT and seems to be rare in the secular literature as well. It may mean that He was planning to go further, and He let them know it, or it may mean that He just wanted them to think that.

I have a hard time getting my head around Jesus as deceiver, even in so small a thing as making people think He was going to do something He had no intention of doing, and what would be the point of acting like He was not stopping, but He was? Was He playing hard to get? Was He waiting for them to ask Him to stay? Can Jesus have a change of mind?

I think it's okay for Jesus to change His mind. I think He was planning to go farther than Emmaus, and that He changed His mind and stayed there, and then He went back to Jerusalem. It makes sense to think that Jesus was walking on this road from Jerusalem to the north and west to go to Galilee. That's where He had told the Apostles they would meet.

That's the message that both the angel and later on Jesus Himself would tell the woman to deliver to the Apostles. He was not just wandering aimlessly around Palestine. The only question remaining is what made Him change plans, turn back and backtrack to Jerusalem, where we will find Him later on, walking through the walls and into That Room?

It is entirely possible that He is headed for Galilee, as per the plan, expecting the Apostles to be there. Could it be that Cleopas and The Other Guy had mentioned, during their telling Jesus of "all" that was happening in Jerusalem, that nobody was going to Galilee, and that caused Jesus to backtrack to Jerusalem because that's where the Apostles were holed up.

It seems reasonable to think that neither were Cleopas and the other guy just wandering around Palestine aimlessly. Were they also headed to Galilee to meet up with Jesus, as per the plan? In their tossing ideas back and forth, didn't one of the ideas have to be that Jesus has risen? Was their journey towards Galilee was a search for answers to their questions?

29. When they saw that He was going to continue on down the road, "παρεβιάσαντο αὐτὸν – they strongly encouraged" Him to stay the night. It would be a very natural invitation to make in that time and place. The verb occurs in the NT only here and in Acts (16:15), where we find Luke and Paul at Philippi, and Lydia really wants them to stay at her house.

There, in Philippi, they ended up baptizing her and her family, and she naturally invited them to stay at her house. Luke tells us that "she prevailed upon us" and so they stayed. The root word for that verb is "βιάζομαι," which includes using physical force. But that would not be very hospitable, and it's not likely to have been what's going on there or here.

Like your mother when she's encouraging you to stay the night and go back to school in the morning. They make their case by arguing that it is late, and so Jesus enters in to stay the night. We have talked here before about the inherent dangers of travelling after dark in that time and place. There were no streetlights or flashlights, but there were robbers.

A lone traveler was easy prey for any of a number of nocturnal animals, not the least, of them man, the most dangerous. When the men strongly encouraged Jesus to stay the night, they no doubt reminded Him of some of those dangers, and at this point, that's the long and the short of why they opened their home. They still don't know the identity of the traveler.

30. We move inside, and the guest becomes the host. Now, "λαβὼν τὸν ἄρτον εὐλόγησεν καὶ κλάσας ἐπέδιδου αὐτοῖς – taking the bread, he blessed it, and having broken, He was giving it to them." Those are the exact same words – two forms are different – in the exact same order as the words He spoke as recorded in Luke at the institution of the Sacrament.

31. Back in verse sixteen, we noted that their eyes were prevented from recognizing Jesus, and now, upon His breaking of bread, "διηνοιχθησαν οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ, καὶ ἐπέγνωσαν αὐτόν – their eyes were completely opened, and they knew Him." The first verb appears eight times in the NT, seven of them in Luke's writings, three of them in this chapter (32, 45).

It means a very thorough, rather than partial opening; it's a metaphor for understanding. We might say something like "he went into it with his eyes wide open." It's a passive verb, leaving us to fill in the subject of the action, which is God, who opens them. The second verb likewise has connotations of understanding as well as simply factual knowledge.

It all became to them crystal clear "in the breaking of bread" when Jesus said what He said. But then, right after that, just like that, Luke tells us that "ἄφαντος ἐγένετο ἀπ' αὐτῶν – He became unseen from them." The compound ἄφαντος is a hapax in the NT, but its root is common, making thirty-one appearances, and it's translated "manifest" or "revealed."

The negator prefix makes this word the opposite of "manifest" or "revealed." It doesn't say that He left, or that He's no longer there, but only that they could no longer see Him. His vanishing seems to have been in an unusual, perhaps even a miraculous way. There was certainly a lot of that going around. But what about the timing of His disappearance?

It may have been as simple as Him saying the Words of Institution, and then He's gone from their sight, and the only thing to look at is the bread, which is from now on sufficient.

From now on, they don't have to see the actual Jesus because they saw Him "in the breaking of bread." Nor do we have to see the actual Jesus to see the actual Jesus in the Sacrament.

Now He will walk the earth for forty days, then Ascend into heaven, and for the past two Millennia Christians have been recognizing Jesus "in the breaking of bread." As Kleinig has famously said, He is more present after the Ascension than He ever was before it. Besides that, His work for the day is not quite finished. Back to Jerusalem to That Room.

32. After the fact they tell each other that they knew that something was up, even while they were on the road “Οὐχὶ ἡ καρδία ἡμῶν καιομένη ἦν ἐν ἡμῖν – didn't our hearts burn within us.” The rhetorical sentence beginning with Οὐχὶ is expecting a positive response, and the response is not recorded, but it's a rhetorical sentence; the answer is obvious.

That happened, “ὡς ἐλάλει ἡμῖν ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ, ὡς διήνοιγεν ἡμῖν τὰς γραφάς – as He was completely opening to us the scripture.” Their observation speaks to the effect of the Word, taught in its truth and purity, to "fully open" the spiritual eyes of Christians to Jesus and the things of God. Jesus was a very good teacher, and we should always emulate Jesus.

This conversation — and Luke almost surely summarizes here — means that they did not immediately get up and go to Jerusalem. They have just found out that they have been walking with Jesus, learning from Jesus, eating with Jesus, and just a few hours before that they were mourning His passing. They would have had to talk some things through.

33. But not for long. Luke tells us that "ἀναστάντες αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ ὑπέστρεψαν εἰς Ἱερουσαλήμ – rising up in that hour, they went back to Jerusalem." The word ὥρᾳ – hour is used in the Bible in much the same way that we use it. It can mean an indefinite time, but almost always it means sixty minutes. Here, I think it means they left within the hour.

Several commentators note the irony here; these men strongly encouraged Jesus to stay put for the night – probably because of the dangers of travel at night – and now they are venturing out at night, a dangerous time to travel. I suppose you could say that there was safety in numbers, but it's not like they were going to sleep on it or even could sleep on it.

Besides that, we find out later that they wanted to tell the Jerusalem contingent what had just happened to them while they were walking and the like. When they got to Jerusalem, they sought out and "εὑρον ἡθροισμένους τοὺς ἑνδεκά καὶ τοὺς σὺν αὐτοῖς – they found gathered the eleven and the others with them." Judas is not there, and other disciples are.

34. Upon the arrival of the Emmaus contingent, the Jerusalem contingent "λέγοντας ὅτι ὄντως ἡγέρθη ὁ Κύριος καὶ ὤφθη Σίμωνι – is saying, 'The Lord has really been raised, and has been revealed to Simon.'" It's a passive verb, and none of the English translations pick up on it. They don't say "He is risen," but they do say "He has been raised." LBT.

The word “ὄντως – really” occurs ten times in the NT, and almost always it is used to speak of a situation or event where the veracity of that situation or event may be in question. The

word assures us that something that seems to be quite unlikely is to the contrary really, really is true. Then another passive verb, missed by the translators, more LBT.

So exactly when was it that Jesus was seen alive by Peter? The first recorded seeing is That Room appearance from last week, which is currently taking place in Luke. So far, what has been revealed to Simon is the empty tomb – Peter saw it and went into it – and the neatly folded burial linens, but none of the Gospels record Peter seeing a living Jesus before that.

It's possible that those making that claim for Peter were making it up, but I don't think so. A cursory perusal of the Bible Scholars at biblehub.com – they see the same thing and conclude that Peter must have seen Jesus at some point unrecorded by anybody. It's the way of things, and John finishes his gospel by pointing out what should be obvious.

35. The Emmaus men then relate to the Jerusalem people “τὰ ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ καὶ ὡς ἐγνώσθη αὐτοῖς ἐν τῇ κλάσει τοῦ ἄρτου – the things on the road, and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.” The two groups are comparing notes, and slowly but surely are coming to the conclusion that Jesus must have been raised from the dead.

Jesus had at some point parted from the Emmaus walkers, but now (v. 36) he was going to be entering That Room through the walls. He would confer to them the power to forgive sins – or not, and continue teaching the Word, appearing to over five hundred eyewitnesses between now and when He departs by Ascension. Doesn't sound like a dead guy to me.

Law/Gospel

Hidden/Revealed — This appearance of Jesus has similarities to the locked room appearance. In both instances Jesus was not there, and then He was there. In the locked room He actually appeared in His body, while here He appears in "the breaking of bread," the same way in which He appears to us these days.

Despair/Joy — The men seem to be just a little bit depressed about what has happened to Jesus. Welcome to life in the Church Militant. Jesus brings us a taste of the Church Triumphant by showing Himself to these men alive, like He shows Himself to us in "the breaking of bread."

Dead/Alive — Certainly a recurring theme for the entire Easter Season, and for every Sunday, as Christians gather to celebrate His Resurrection, which is our resurrection.

Sermon Titles

On the Road to Emmaus

In the Breaking of Bread

Jesus Learns About Jesus

Strangers on a Road

Emmaus Walkers

Rev. Steven L. Anderson, Pastor
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Grand Mound, Iowa

