

HE IS RISEN!

Luke 24:13-35



APRIL 21, 2019 | DAVID ANDERSON

My children love riddles. They share riddles with me and they take great delight as I feebly guess in hopes of answering their riddles. They tell me, "I can't believe you haven't figured it out already." I remind them after they ridicule their dad, "Most riddles don't make sense at first; it's not until they are explained that everything comes into full view."

Today, on Easter morning, Jesus has a riddle for you. His riddle is this: *How do you get joy from a bloody crucifixion? How can there be any hope in suffering and loss? How do you get life from death?*

In Luke 24:13 we find two men who are perplexed by this riddle. These two men aren't famous; they are like you and me. It's Easter Sunday, but it is not Easter Sunday yet for them. They are on their way to a town called Emmaus from the tragedy of Jerusalem.

¹³ Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" ¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. ²¹ "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. ²² "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. ²³ "When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. ²⁴ "And certain 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." ²⁵ Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. ²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" ³³ So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" –Luke 24:13-34

These men were discussing, going back and forth, trying to figure out exactly what happened the last few days. Their teacher, their rabbi was tortured and crucified and killed by an angry mob. As far as they were concerned this was the end of Jesus. Yes, they believed that everyone would be resurrected at the end of time (John 11:24), but Jesus' body wasn't going anywhere soon. They were going home and were discouraged and defeated. They could not understand that such great expectation had ended in such outrageous tragedy. They, like every other disciple of Christ, did not want to hear about suffering and death. Yahweh was not about suffering and death. Yahweh was about victory and triumph.

How does God take humans who are darkened and confused by the facts of Jesus' suffering and Jesus' glory? He comes alongside of them, and that is what Jesus does with these two on the road to Emmaus. He knows them, but they aren't able to identify Him; he was hidden from their hearts (Luke 9:45, 18:34).

NT Wright explains that Israel had viewed their history as a long story of how Yahweh would deliver Israel from suffering (Luke 1.68; 2.38; 21.28). However, this was not a long story of how Yahweh would deliver Israel from suffering. This was now a story of how Yahweh would deliver Israel through suffering, the suffering of God's own Son.

These disciples had heard the reports of the women and of angels, but they hadn't seen Jesus. The possibility of resurrection was the last thing to come to mind. Jesus' response is surprisingly forceful to these two disciples. He says in vs. 25, "You foolish people— how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Wasn't it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explains the riddle of how life comes from death and sweetness from a bloody crucifixion. With the end of their journey in sight, vs. 28 says, "Jesus acted as if he were going further." There is no reason to suppose that Jesus was playing games with the two disciples. Had they not invited him into their home, he would have gone on his way.

In their homes Jesus takes the bread and says a blessing and gives it to them (v. 30). In this moment Jesus and the Holy Spirit make Him known. It wasn't His nail-marked hands as it was for Thomas, but here it is the breaking of bread where the eyes of these disciples are opened and they discover the resurrected Savior of the world has been with them all along.

EASTER AND YOU!

You are going to leave here today and life is going to grind on. Lots to do. Lots to be worried about. Lots of pain and struggle. God's risen Son not only walked alongside these two on the road to Emmaus, but He is walking alongside of you this morning and wants to explain the greatest riddle of life.

The two disciples said, "But we were hoping that it was Jesus who was going to redeem Israel?" They thought they were wrong because He was crucified, but the resurrection demonstrates that they had been right all along, that the cross wasn't a failure but rather Jesus' crowning achievement. The resurrection is God's vindication of Jesus. How do you get life from death? How do you get sweetness from a crucifixion? It only comes through the death and resurrection of Jesus and faith in Him alone.

Jesus knows you better than you know yourself. He knows everything and it has not and will not scare Him off. Jesus keeps showing up. Why? Because Jesus (in His own words) didn't come to save the strong. He came to save the sick and the weak. We are powerless to heal our sin and heal our lives. Jesus came to save us from a life of trying and failing. He has come to rescue us through faith alone in Him alone.

Paul says this is the greatest news you can ever hear—"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4.)

If you believe in Him today, life's greatest riddle will not be a riddle for you anymore, but will become to you a fountain springing forth into eternal life.