



# Day of Arising

Cleopas and his friend had perhaps traveled the seven-mile road from Jerusalem to Emmaus many times before (Luke 24: 13–35). Perhaps on this day they walked the family road because they had business to do. Perhaps they were fleeing. Perhaps they were wandering aimlessly in their grief. This time the road *wasn't* the same as before. The burden they carried was heavy. When the stranger lengthened his stride to match theirs and inquired into their conversations they responded with fallen faces. The cacophony of experiences weighed them down: deep darkness of grief over the violent death of their friend and teacher, the one they *thought* was Messiah. Then the confusing report from the women just that morning—Jesus was not in the tomb. They didn't know what to make of it. As the unknown companion listens and speaks, they are so intrigued that they invite him to come and stay when they reach their destination. He would have gone on if they hadn't invited him to stay. “As fades the first day” they share a meal and the stranger moves in a way that is distinctly Jesus—giving thanks and breaking bread. Eyes widened, they see: it is Jesus the Christ! Before they can grasp Him, Jesus disappears from the table. This is remarkable, even surprising.

The two all but run (in the dark, mind you) the seven miles they'd just trudged to share the good news with their friends: what a difference risen Christ makes. Their steps are light, hearts ablaze. They rush to their friends, breathlessly telling their story when Jesus appears in their midst. Jesus waited until they arrived—gone seven miles yet again—to show up...again. Now it's been fourteen miles traveled. Do you see the patience and respect Jesus has for the journey?

It's with the same patience, respect, and surprising ways that risen Christ joins our journeys. Do you know the heaviness of grief and confusion? Has Jesus “disappeared” on you in some part of life, in your ministry? Have you been blinded by what you've seen and so cannot see the unknown companion who walks with you? Where do you and I feel the absence of Christ?

Christ walks with His followers on the journey. We cannot predict the moments when we will glimpse Jesus and before we can grasp Him, “lose Him” only for Him to appear a little further down the journey. Notice how Christ moves in the story: uninvited and unannounced he eavesdrops and joins their journey. But later he set about to move on unless they invite him. Such are the surprising ways of Christ...still.

Christ is inviting us to pay attention, to note when our hearts burn and so that we might turn and invite Christ to “stay, do not part.” One way we offer the invitation to Christ is by regularly gathering with Christ's body. In the *practice* of gathering we have opportunity to open ourselves to Christ. In the *practice* of sharing the Lord's Supper we avail ourselves to know Christ in surprising, resurrected-life-kind of ways—no matter how familiar, painful or long the road has been.