

Bible Study, Collegiate

[STUDENT LESSON, Collegiate Quarterly]

Key Text: Luke 24:13-25

Imagine that you've just walked seven miles of rocky terrain. It's been a long, tedious journey and you're glad to be home—a cool shower, a home-cooked meal, and a soft bed await you. But before you can kick off your dusty shoes, you discover that you have to hike back the seven miles! How would you feel? What kind of reasons would motivate you to gladly trek the road you just traveled?

The scriptural passage for this week focuses on one of the greatest short stories on “hope.” The setting: A westbound road from Jerusalem to Emmaus; The time: The end of the day, towards sunset; The characters: Two men and a stranger. The story: a simple, yet profound, chain of events. From this familiar story, there are lessons to be learned.

1. Walk into the sunrise, not the sunset (Luke 24:13-17). Having just witnessed the crucifixion of the “prophet” who they hoped would deliver them from Roman bondage, these grief-stricken men are returning home without hope. Jesus meets them on the road, but they do not recognize Him. Why? Probably because the dazzle of the setting sun (Emmaus was west of Jerusalem) blurred their vision. Had they had the sunset behind them, perhaps they might have recognized Jesus. It is only with hope that you can move towards the sunrise, towards a new day. The Christian does not look back into the past, into the sunsets; The Christian looks to the future, to the dawn of each new day. The difference? Hope!

2. Make sense of the confusion (Luke 24:25-27). The story begins with faces “twisted with grief,” but ends with hearts “burning” with good news. Jesus walks the long rocky terrain with them—He provokes their thinking, explains their questionings, clears up their doubts. Despite His shortage of time, Jesus walks with them, eats with them, stays with them. Jesus is there for us for as long as it takes to makes sense of the confusion around us. Because of Jesus' company on the journey home, the men discovered the sequel to the mysterious weekend they had experienced in Jerusalem. The sequel was the fulfillment of prophecy, the fulfillment of the hope of the Messiah.

3. Share the joy. What motivated the men to hike back to Jerusalem? The discovery of hope! When they discovered that their traveling companion was the same Jesus who was crucified, they forgot about their tired feet, about the fact that it was too late in the day to travel back to Jerusalem, about the wasted time. Without hope, you experience the lethargy of depression. With hope, you are energized with a desire to share the joy with others.

Sharing hope creates a bond of fellowship. It is like the birth of true friendship. You can be casual friends with many, but when you share an experience and create a memory with someone, you are bonded for life. Hope is a great motivator. It can help you do things you would not otherwise do. It was hope that made the two men travel back to Jerusalem. What parts of your life would you like hope to take you back to? Consider two things you would like to see happen in your personal life and in the world church. How can hope help these things happen?