

The 3rd Sunday of Easter ~ Sunday, April 19, 2026
“Joy Takes Root ~ From Despair to Renewed Witness”
1 Kings 19:1-12 & Luke 24:13-35

Both of these encounters remind us that joy isn't _____ or automatic, nor does it appear _____ grown. Like a seed planted in the soil, joy takes time to grow, to stretch its roots downward, and to _____ through the changing seasons of life.

JOY THAT TURNS DESPAIR INTO RENEWED WITNESS

#1. Joy _____.

“While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.” (Luke 25:15)

Not after they figured things out, not after their _____ returned or their fears disappeared, but while they were confused and _____.

Luke tells us their eyes were kept from _____ Him. In other words, the risen Jesus was walking beside them, listening to their conversation, and they had no idea He was there.

The prophet Elijah had just experienced one of the greatest victories of his life on Mount Carmel, where he defeated the prophets of Baal. You'd think he'd be full of _____ and courage. But instead, after Queen Jezebel threatened his life, he ran into the wilderness in _____.

“It is enough now, O Lord; take away my life.” (1 Kings 19:4)

This isn't the prayer of a _____ prophet, but a _____ servant. Elijah had reached the end of his strength. He was tired, frightened, and disillusioned, and everything felt _____ than he could carry.

God draws near to _____ hearts.

When Elijah lay down under the tree, overwhelmed and ready to give up, God didn't abandon him or _____ him for his weakness. Instead, the Lord sent an angel to wake him gently and provide bread and water. This is an incredible picture of God's _____. Not _____ or frustration, but compassion.

He walks beside the two discouraged disciples, listens to their grief, and allows them to speak their _____.

There are seasons in life when _____ feels fragile, when disappointment

lingers, and when the future looks _____. There are moments when prayers seem unanswered, when losses feel overwhelming, and when faith feels more like _____ than celebration.

In these moments, it can feel as if we're walking alone. However, the Emmaus story reminds us that appearances can be _____. The two disciples thought they were walking away from hope, but hope was walking _____ them.

We assume that God is _____ because we can't see Him or that Jesus is _____ because we can't recognize Him. But Scripture tells us something different: He draws _____.

“The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.” (Ps 34:18)

“When you walk through the waters, I will be with you.” (Isaiah 43:2)

The promise of Scripture isn't that hardship will be _____, but that God's presence won't be _____.

Many people assume that joy only comes after circumstances _____—once grief fades, problems resolve, or clarity comes. However, the Emmaus story teaches us something different. Joy begins when Jesus draws near, in the midst of _____, not when our circumstances change.

This is where joy begins to take root—not in comfort or in certainty, but in the quiet _____ that Jesus walks beside us, even when we can't recognize Him.

Christ draws near to discouraged hearts. He walks beside weary travellers. He meets us not only in moments of _____, but also in moments of exhaustion and _____.

#2. Joy _____. (Luke 24:17)

“What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?”

“Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” (Luke 24:18)

“But we had hoped...” (Luke 24:21) These 4 words carry the weight of _____.

God doesn't _____ His people in their discouragement. Instead, He _____.

Jesus doesn't offer comfort or reassurance, but _____.

“O foolish ones and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!” (Luke 24:25)

These words may sound sharp to our ears, however, they’re not spoken in anger, but in _____. Jesus isn’t trying to shame them, but to _____ them so they can _____. Because their sadness wasn’t simply caused by circumstances, but by _____.

“Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:27)

Little by little, step by step, the pieces began to fall into _____. And although they didn’t yet recognize Jesus with their eyes, something was happening deep within them.

“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” (Luke 24:32)

That burning heart is the sign that _____ is beginning to grow again

That’s often how God works—not through spectacle, but through steady _____ and His Word. Not always dramatic, often quiet, but always _____.

And joy grows when God’s Word begins to make sense of what once felt _____. That’s why opening Scripture is such an important part of the Christian life. It’s not just about information, but also _____.

“The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword.” (Heb 4:12)

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)

Just as a lamp doesn’t illuminate the entire road at once, but gives just enough light for the next step, joy returns, not through instant answers, but through gradual _____.

When God’s Word is read, heard, explained, and received, something begins to _____—not always on the surface, but deep within the heart.

Joy grows when Scripture opens our understanding. Not when life becomes easy, not when questions disappear, but when God’s Word helps us see that even suffering, confusion, and disappointment aren’t outside the reach of His _____.

The disciples on the road thought the story had ended in _____. However, when

Jesus opened the Scriptures, they discovered that what looked like failure was actually _____.

#3. Joy _____.

“Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” (Luke 24:29)

This small invitation turns out to be the doorway to _____, as Luke describes a simple, familiar moment—one that would’ve felt _____ at the time—yet would soon become unforgettable.

As they sat at the table together, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. In that moment, their eyes were opened and they _____ Him.

This is the _____ of the Christian life: the Word prepares the heart and the Table opens the eyes.

This isn’t just a meal, it’s _____.

On the Emmaus road, the risen Jesus provides something even greater—not just bread to strengthen the body, but bread that reveals His _____.

And although we don’t see Jesus with our _____ eyes, we recognize Him by _____. Not absent, not distant, but present. And that recognition deepens _____ in a way that nothing else can.

Recognition didn’t create His presence, it _____ it.

Recognition leads to _____. Joy leads to _____. Encounter leads to _____.

Every time we gather around the Lord’s Table, something _____ happens. Scripture is opened. Bread is broken. Christ is made known—not by sight, but by _____. And in that recognition, joy grows deeper roots. Not shallow joy, not temporary happiness, but lasting joy—the kind that strengthens weary hearts and sends people back into the world with renewed _____.



The good news of Easter is: even when we can’t see Him, Jesus is walking beside us. Even when our understanding feels dim, He _____ through His Word. Even when the journey feels long, He _____ us with His presence. And when our eyes are opened to recognize Him, we’ll find that what once felt like the road of _____ has become the road where _____ begins to grow.