

Consider this comment a girl posted on an atheist website:

I'm confused ... I always believed science would be the cure-all for my problems, but I don't know if I can keep living without eternal life. I guess I'll just have to find a way myself to make it through this meaningless existence. I just wish I knew of someone who could show me the path to eternal life. If science can't provide the answers, though, then who or what can!? **\*\*sigh\*\*** Doesn't it seem like there is a higher power that gives our lives purpose? Well, science says there isn't, so there isn't. Hopelessness

In our text today, we find two men walking along the road, and their lives have also become hopeless. At this particular time, it appears that their lives have fallen apart.

They said "Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people... our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. **But we had hoped** that he was the one to redeem Israel." Luke 24:19-21

**They had HOPED** Jesus would be the answer to eternal life. They **had HOPED** He would change their lives. They **had HOPED** He would make a difference in their world... but He was dead now.

There was no longer **any hope**. They were filled with despair, defeat and discouragement.

Now, they HAD heard stories that Jesus WASN'T dead. "some (of the) women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that (Jesus) was alive." Luke 24:22-23

But clearly, they don't believe it. Dead people tended to stay dead. For them, the stories of Jesus rising from the dead were just foolish thinking. They refused to believe in a "false hope."

There was a recent Avengers movie where one characters promises the hero Hawkeye to bring his family back from the dead. His response was "Don't give me false hope! And one of the other characters replied: "It's not false hope if it's possible."

The disciples were feeling the same thing on the road that day.

But Hope in God is different! It is what makes the Christian faith different from any other religion. Our hope is found in what Jesus did for us through the resurrection.

Hope in God is the essence of our being. David wrote: "Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear him, on those who HOPE in his steadfast love" (Psalm 33:18). And again: "For you, O Lord, are my HOPE, my trust..." (Psalm 71:5).

As children of a living God, we need hope in our lives. In fact, we can't SURVIVE without hope.

Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky says "Life without hope is to cease to live"

Now what I found interesting about the story in Luke 24, is that these men (walking to Emmaus) didn't realize who they were talking to. They didn't realize it was Jesus. But I found odd was that Jesus didn't just say: "Hey guys, it's me! I'm alive. It's not a hoax! Here, put your fingers in the nail prints, put your hand in my side"

After all that's what Jesus said Thomas. Maybe Jesus took the time to deal with THEIR hopelessness so that we'd know how to deal with OURS. All have us have faced times in life when we've become discouraged, downhearted and filled with hopelessness.

At the moment we have the corona virus. We are all dealing with staying at home, social distancing, face masks, hand sanitizer, and hearing constant updates of the latest death toll. Many of us, are probably feeling boxed in and trapped.

We can say that as Christians, we are never without hope. Christ Jesus is our hope in our every circumstance.

But there may be times when we feel utterly hopeless. When our hopes and dreams are shattered, never to be fulfilled. When we can't see beyond our pain to grasp the hope He offers. To believe there will ever be a better day on the horizon.

I believe what Jesus did for these 2 men on the road to Emmaus was recorded for our encouragement and hope. I believe the things Jesus did for these men He does for us when we get discouraged.

Notice the first thing Jesus does. "And he said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?' And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." Luke 24:25-27

He opened the Bible for them. God's word is a tool God gave us to encourage us. In fact, that's what we're told in Romans "And the Scriptures were written to teach and encourage us by giving us hope. Romans 15:4

The scriptures were written so that we might have.... HOPE. There is power in the pages of your Bible. If you're not reading it, you're robbing yourself of the potential God wants to give you. It gives us guidance of how to become overcomers in a difficult and challenging world.

Back in 1942, a B17 crashed into the Pacific Ocean. Captain Eddie Rickenbacker, and 6 other men were adrift in 3 small rafts with no water and only four oranges. They tied their boats together, and drifted day after day. They were without food or water, tortured by the relentless sun by day and chilling cold by night, and constantly being stalked by sharks. It seemed impossible they could survive,

One of the men, Private Johnny Bartek, was a dedicated Christian who always carried a little New Testament with him so that he could have his daily devotions. And there, in the middle of the Pacific, Bartek had his daily devotions. It wasn't very private, and eventually the other 6 men wanted to know what he was doing. When he explained to them about his daily Bible reading and prayer, they asked they could be included. And so, the men started having their daily devotions beginning at the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew.

When they got to Matthew 6:31-34... life changed for them. They read these words: "What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." And so, that's what they began to pray for. As the men read those verses day after day, a remarkable series of miracles started happening.

Just when they were near starvation, a bird landed on Rickenbacker's head. They grabbed it, carved it up for food, and use its innards for fishing bait. Just when they

were near death by thirst, a cloud would drift over and fill their raft with water. Day after day as they read these verses, prayed, and claimed these promises, God would somehow send food and water. Sometimes even a fish would jump into their raft. That went on for 21 days as they drifted under the blazing sun in middle of Pacific.

Lieutenant James Whittaker wrote "I don't think there was a man of us who didn't thank God for that little khaki covered book. It led us to prayer and prayer led us to safety." ("We Thought We Heard the Angels Sing," by Lieutenant James Whittaker)

They found their hope in the pages of the Bible.

And the Bible has that kind of power. Its words can turn our hearts toward God, and when our hearts turn toward God, we learn trust in Him... and then we have HOPE.

Now I want you to notice, when Jesus walked with the men to Emmaus, He didn't just do a Bible study with them. He didn't say "Let's turn to the book of Leviticus and see if there is some kernel of truth, we can apply to our lives today." Oh no. As He walked with them, He taught them about what the Bible said about His resurrection. "Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

A study that focused ENTIRELY on Jesus and what He had come to do. Now there's all kinds of important things to learn out of the Bible but THE most important thing we can learn about --- is Jesus. Without Jesus, there is no hope.

Luke 24:28-31 "... they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.' So, he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him."

It was in the breaking of the bread that their eyes were opened, and they saw who Jesus really was.

Conclusion: In his book "*Deserted by God?*" author and pastor Sinclair Ferguson shares the following story:

The first physician to die of the AIDS virus in the United Kingdom was a young Christian. He had contracted it while doing medical research in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. In the last days of his life, his power of communication failed. He struggled with increasing difficulty to express his thoughts to his wife. On one occasion she simply could not understand his message. He wrote on a note pad the letter *J*. She ran through her medical dictionary, saying various words beginning with *J*. None was right. Then she said, "**Jesus?**"

That was the right word. He was with them. That was all either of them needed to know, their *hope was in Jesus*.