



PREVIEW ONLY

Cleopas and the Unexpected Traveler

Adventures on the Road to Emmaus

by Paul Ellis

What On a dusty road outside of Jerusalem, two grieving disciples are joined by a mysterious visitor.

Themes: Easter, grief, joy, grace

Message Jesus is the Good Shepherd who finds his lost sheep.

Who Minimum 4 characters with doubling; 6+ characters without

NARRATOR (for table readings; otherwise replace with lines for direction)

CLEOPAS, a disillusioned disciple

MARY, the wife of Cleopas

TRAVELER / JESUS

NATHANEL, a skeptical disciple

THADDEUS, a disciple

Assorted DISCIPLES who react with adlibbed lines

Props Flatbread and grape juice

Time 10 minutes

Ages 11+

Source Luke 24:13-49

Bonus Free leader's guide with fun facts, discussion questions, and illustrations.

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Narrator A man and woman hurried down a dusty path, their faces hooded against the afternoon sun. The man glanced furtively over his shoulder, his face is lined with worry.

Cleopas *(Anxious)* Someone is following us.

Mary Relax Cleopas. It's just another traveler. If the chief priests were after us, they would have sent the temple guard.

Cleopas I can't believe you went to the tomb this morning. That was too dangerous.

Mary *(Grins)* I wish you had been there. We saw angels!

Cleopas Your grief has addled your mind, woman.

Mary We were frightened because the stone had been rolled away. But these men appeared and said, "He is not here. He is risen."

Cleopas *(Skeptical)* If they were angels from God, why didn't they stop Jesus from going to the cross? He was supposed to be the Messiah. But he died, and he wasn't.

Mary The angels said, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and rise again on the third day."

Cleopas Then where is he? Where is the body? Where is Jesus?

A voice interrupts them.

Traveler Greetings, friends.

Cleopas jumps in surprise.

Cleopas *(Clutching his chest.)* Oh! Sir, you startled me.

Mary Greetings, good sir. You have to forgive my husband, sir. He's a little on edge.

Traveler Why is that?

Mary The events of the past few days have unsettled him.

Cleopas Hush, Mary. You say too much.

The Traveler looks at them with concern.

Traveler I can see that you are weighed down with cares.

Cleopas You are a pilgrim, yes? Returning from the Passover. Surely you are aware of all that has happened in Jerusalem these past few days.

The traveler says nothing.

Cleopas *(Cont'd)* Perhaps you have heard of Jesus the Nazarene, a prophet of God. He was mighty in deed.

Mary He healed the sick!

Cleopas He raised the dead.

Mary He drove out demons!

Cleopas We thought he was the Messiah, sent by God to set Israel free.

Mary He said the kingdom of God was at hand.

Cleopas *(Rueful)* He said a lot of things.

Mary places a gentle hand on Cleopas's arm.

Mary Cleopas.

Cleopas *(Upset)* We left everything to follow him, but for what? Three days ago the chief priests and the rulers sentenced him to death. Then they crucified him like a criminal.

Mary It was awful, just awful. His poor mother.

Cleopas We set our hopes on him but he died.

Cleopas has a look of defeat.

Cleopas *(Cont'd)* So much for delivering Israel.

Mary *(Encouragingly)* Tell him about the tomb.

Cleopas I don't think he wants to hear about that.

Mary Tell him.

Cleopas *(Sighs)* This morning, my wife and some of the women went to the tomb to anoint the body. But it was empty.

Mary We saw angels!

Cleopas But no body. It was gone. No doubt the chief priests took it. Or maybe the Romans. Either way, he's gone and we're going home.

The Traveler turns on his companions with arms spread in exasperation.

Traveler How foolish and slow of heart you are to believe what the prophets have said.

Cleopas *(Frowns)* I beg your pardon?

Traveler Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?

Cleopas I don't understand.

Traveler We have just celebrated the Feast of Passover. Who started this feast?

Cleopas Moses did.

Traveler And was it not Moses who taught that the Passover Lamb was a sign pointing to the Lamb of God who was sacrificed for the sins of the world?

Cleopas Well, yes...

Mary looks suddenly excited.

Mary *(Interrupts)* Jesus is the Lamb of God!

Traveler During the Feast we sing the words of Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Mary Jesus said those words on the cross. I heard him!

Traveler And didn’t the prophet Isaiah say the Messiah would be rejected by his own people and led like a lamb to the slaughter?

Cleopas seems thoughtful and a little more optimistic.

Cleopas When you put it like that...

Traveler And other prophets, from David to Zechariah, said the hands and feet of the Messiah would be pierced....

Mary His hands were pierced. I saw them!

Traveler And that they would cast lots for his clothes...

Mary claps her hands with excitement.

Mary The soldiers did that. I saw that too!

Traveler And that he would be betrayed by a close friend?

Mary *(Nods)* Judas betrayed him!

Traveler Perhaps you are familiar with this prophecy: “I will strike the shepherd...”

Cleopas *(Quotes)* “... and the sheep will be scattered.” Zechariah said the Messiah would be struck...

Traveler And?

Cleopas And his followers would flee. I fled. We all did.

The traveler says nothing as if waiting.

Cleopas *(Cont'd)* We're fleeing now.

Cleopas hangs his head.

Cleopas *(To himself)* What have I done?

The companions walk in silence for several minutes. Cleopas is deep in thought.

Traveler There is more. *(Quotes)* "Hear this, all peoples. Why should I fear the days of evil? God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, and he will receive me."

Cleopas I know that one. It's a psalm from the Sons of Korah.

Traveler *(Nods)* Well spoken. The psalm declares the Messiah will be raised from the depths. And do you remember Jonah who rose from the depths? On what day did he rise?

Cleopas He rose on the third day.

Mary Jesus said the Son of Man would be in the depths...

Cleopas *(Interrupts)* ...For the three days.

Traveler And today is...

Cleopas's face lights up.

Cleopas ...the third day! How could I not have seen this?

Narrator The three companions came to a small village. Cleopas and Mary turned to enter, but the Traveler kept walking.

Cleopas *(To Traveler)* Good sir, will you stay with us? The day is nearly gone and the hour is getting late. Please share a meal with us.

The Traveler smiles.

Narrator The traveler followed Cleopas and Mary into their house. As they sat down to eat, the traveler took the bread and blessed it.

Traveler This bread is my body which was given for you. Take it and eat.

Cleopas *(Frowns)* What?

Mary gasps and points.

Mary Cleopas, look at his hands. *Look at his hands!*

Narrator Cleopas stared at the traveler's hands. They were strong hands and pierced.

Cleopas *(Eyes wide)* How...

The traveler lifts a cup.

Traveler This is the blood of the covenant, which was poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink this, and remember me.

Mouth agape, Mary raises her hands to her face, finally seeing the truth.

Mary Jesus!

Cleopas *(Shocked)* It's you.

Traveler Finally, you believe.

Cleopas My Lord and my God.

Traveler Everything that was foretold has come to pass. Go tell the others. I will see you soon.

Narrator Jesus smiled and was gone. Mary and Cleopas sat frozen like statues with mouths agape.

Mary He's alive!

Cleopas We broke bread with Jesus!

Mary We need to tell his mother.

Cleopas rises to his feet.

Cleopas We should tell everyone.

Narrator That same hour, Cleopas and Mary left for Jerusalem. By the light of the moon they retraced their steps to the great city.

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