

WEEKLY REFLECTION

As you look back at 2025, what is it that you approach the end of the year with? Are you relieved that it's over, or are you recovering from all that happened? Do you grieve not just our city, but the world with its injustices, crises, and natural disasters?

It can be tempting to ask God where He is in the midst of all this. The two strangers in this week's passage of Luke 24:13-35 certainly did. There are hints to tell us that they were part of Jesus' disciples: they heard from the women who had visited Jesus' tomb that His body had vanished. (v.22) They knew where the eleven were, even though they were probably in hiding at this point. (v.33b) Yet Jesus still approaches them as a stranger, with gentleness and curiosity. He meets them where they are (v.17, 19), and takes the time to explain how all of Scripture points ultimately to Himself. (v.27)

Though He leaves them just as suddenly as He joins them (v.31), their hearts and minds are changed. Not only do they recognize Him for who He is, but they also get up and go straight back to Jerusalem. Rather than leaving and walking away with heavy hearts of doubt, they manage to find the eleven and witness to them what they had seen, heard, and experienced. (v.34-35)

Church, when we meet Jesus—truly encounter Him, we are changed. Once we realize that Jesus is who He says He is—that He is the Son of God, sent down to die for our sins; that His death and resurrection changed everything—we become people changed. Even in the midst of the grief, we can have hope, peace, and joy because He is always with us. Church, as you look back at and reflect on 2025, would you allow Jesus to join you? Would you do so with the lens of His death and resurrection? Would you invite Him in to change you?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

If you could experience again a meal from 2025—but this time, have Jesus physically pull up a chair and join you!—which moment would you choose, and why?

QUESTION TWO:

As we think about what grief means or what it looks like, let us hold on to the idea that grief and gratitude can go hand-in-hand: that gratitude doesn't replace grief, but can grow out of it.

When looking back at some of the difficult moments of 2025, are you able to see God's fingerprints over them? Do you see how in all things, how God works for the good of those who love Him, to conform them to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:28-29), or does it still just feel like loss?

QUESTION THREE:

As we head into the new year, can you think of a word or phrase to define what you would want 2026 to look like, or what you would want to focus on?

Is there a specific area of your life where you need to turn around or change direction, and invite Jesus into?