

SPRING 2022

Inscribed



YELLOWSTONE
Theological Institute
EST. 2012

Pursuing Christ-Centered Solutions for a Chaotic World

DR. JAY SMITH
YTI PRESIDENT

I write this letter to you from a hotel room in Bellingham, Wash., where I am teaching our course on “The Wild God.” It is “Eastertide.” Eastertide is a festival season in the Christian liturgical year that focuses on celebrating the resurrection of Jesus.

The early church got it right. We should not simply celebrate the resurrection—the world-altering divine event that changed history—on one day in the Spring. We seem to have reduced Easter to bunnies, eggs, baskets, candy, ham dinner, and a special Easter movie, like “Ben Hur,” “Easter Parade,” or

even a baseball game. But Easter, commemorating the most important event in history, more than deserves our extended celebration.

Think about it: Easter makes Christmas worth celebrating. The resurrection of Jesus gives new meaning to the change of seasons at the spring equinox. The resurrection transforms death to life. For Christians, Easter is not something we simply “celebrate,” rather Easter is the life we live in Jesus.

The turmoil caused by COVID-19, raucous national politics, skyrocketing inflation, and a world on the brink of multi-national war has exponentially multiplied anxiety, depression, and general mental illness, but has also found the church in disarray, not knowing how to respond meaningfully to this new world. Pastors are retiring sooner or simply changing careers; churches are closing their doors because with a declining membership, they can no longer pay their bills and are now disbanding.

► SEE **SOLUTIONS** PAGE 2

FACING THE CHAOS

As Spring 2022 finally begins to take root in the mountains, we find ourselves increasingly anxious in a chaotic cul-

CELEBRATING RESURRECTION

In this issue of Incribed, YTI faculty members consider the resurrection of Jesus from the perspectives of several key witnesses that first Easter — the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the women at the tomb, Peter, and Thomas.



Inspiring Worship

Displaying God's Glory in Art and Music

REV. TRACIE JERNIGAN

This summer, YTI presents “Inspiring Worship,” a week of evening programs focusing on inspiration for worship and the glory of God.

Inspiring Worship, to be held July 18–22 at YTI in Bozeman, will explore the concept of the glory of God and discover how we as God's people can honor and bring glory to God

in all things. The week's sessions will take a scriptural approach to God's glory as we discover how art and music can display God's glory. Attendees will be invited into the dialogue through discussion, and will have opportunities for participation and leadership in worship experiences and in community and worship art. Our historical ventures through Christian art and music will introduce and give examples of important practices for understanding the breadth and depth of our current worship practices.



Rev. Tracie Jernigan
MUSIC/THEOLOGY



Carol Mealer
ART HISTORY



Rev. Kurt Caddy
VISUAL ARTS/
THEOLOGY

► SOLUTIONS FROM PAGE 1

Churches are becoming increasingly political to “attract” attendees; what new church starts are being attempted often find that their methods are not relevant for this situation and close their doors soon after opening. Seminaries are struggling to provide answers to this new paradigm shift, and thus supply new ministers for this chaotic era.

On the other hand, YTI is finding Christ-centered solutions and training men and women for ministry in this new world. As we wrap up the 2021-2022 school year, we find ourselves in a good, healthy position. Our students are healthy and thriving, our faculty is constantly discussing possibilities for the church of the future, and our own funding is in a phase of positive growth. Our donors understand the need for YTI

to provide creative and critical thinking men and women for the sake of the church and work of the Kingdom in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Northwest.

NEW FACULTY AND GROWING PROGRAMS

We have added one full-time and several part-time faculty members to teach in our programs. Dr. Joshua Schendel is our new Professor of Theology, and will start with us in September. Rev. Vern Streeter is our new part-time Lecturer in Adventure and Theology. Rev. Kurt Caddy is our new part-time Lecturer in the Arts & Theology. Carol Mealer is our new part-time Lecturer in Christian Art History. Rev. Tim Knipp is our new Lecturer in New Testament.

Although our Master of Arts degree is our most popular

Our presenters include Kurt Caddy, an artist whose disciplines include art and theology; Carol Mealer, an art historian specializing in ancient Christian art, and Tracie Jernigan, a pastor-musician whose disciplines include theology and worship. Sessions for the week include a theological approach to inspiration and the glory of God, histories of Christian worship and Christian art, a community art project, diverse worship experiences, and a roundtable discussion with our presenters.

The study of Christian music and art will give a deeper understanding to the history of worship in the church and show that theology doesn't happen in a vacuum. While many aspects of the week will be theological and historical, we will also discuss the practical side of incorporating the fine arts into worship gatherings for faith communities to create a richer experience for worshipers.

Whether you're a worship musician or simply interested in Christian art and music, join us for this week of learning and experience. The course may also be taken for academic credit at YTI. 🌱

YTI

Talks

**COMING SOON—
A new podcast
from YTI!**

YTI Talks features conversations with YTI faculty and friends at the intersection of Faith, Adventure, and the Arts. Watch for details at YTI.ORG or on YTI's social media!

Welcome!

NEW FACES



Joshua Schendel
PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY

Joshua D. Schendel, Ph.D. Saint Louis University, grew up in Montana. After completing degrees in classics, philosophy, and theology, he took a position as executive editor of *Modern Reformation* magazine for a couple of years. He is the author of *The Necessity of Christ's Satisfaction* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). He currently resides with his wife, Bethanne, and their three kids, Isaiah (9), Laurel (7), and Edith (5), in Southern California. They are all excited to join the YTI community and get back under the big sky.

Iris Eckles
FINANCE & STUDENT
SERVICES ASSISTANT

We're pleased to welcome Iris Eckles as our new Finance & Student Services Assistant. Iris enjoys hiking, biking, cross country skiing, swimming, and dancing!



Master's degree, it is our EQUIP program that is growing exponentially. This past year began with an EQUIP cohort in Bellingham, Wash. In February, a new EQUIP program was started in Billings, Mont. This fall, a second cohort begins in Bellingham, and we are projecting another cohort in Great Falls, Mont. The EQUIP program is a diploma program delivered in local churches or consortiums of churches. It is a two-year program, delivering courses once a quarter to provide interns, laypersons, and church staff members with a quality, base-line theological education for ministry. The success of this model has been impressive, and the staff at YTI is working hard to keep up with the demand.

Finally, YTI is looking forward to moving "dirt" later this fall in order to begin putting infrastructure in place for our campus. It has been a long journey, and construction costs have

risen astronomically; yet the need for what we provide for our community and for our students is pressing. Construction costs three years ago were roughly \$280/sq. foot; today they are \$610/sq. foot! If you would like to help with our project, we continue to accept donations of any amount!

I pray that each of you is blessed this summer. I pray that your anxiety, depression, and anger subside as the peace of Christ permeates your life.

Dr. Jay Smith, President
Bridger Professor of Theology & Ethics

The Women at the Tomb

The Resurrection and Unexpected Actors

DR. DERRY LONG

Regularly, Jesus added people to the narrative of his life that seemed out of place based on the standards of the day, the definitions of righteousness, and cultural appropriateness.

It was the shepherds, a lowly occupation despised by the Pharisees, that first heard the news of the Messiah's birth. John the Baptist, with an unusual diet and wardrobe—eclectic, even eccentric—became the first proclaimer of the arrival of the King, and then there was Peter and the other “ignorant and unlearned men” who formed the first company of followers. To this we could add that Matthew was a tax collector—scandalous.

The repetition of such events cannot be an accident. Jesus was modeling something—saying something about the values of his kingdom. He was introducing a new way of looking at something.

In this category were the women who followed, served, ministered to, and were ultimately on the stage when Jesus rose from the dead. It was they who were the first to tell others that he was risen. Amazing.

JESUS SHOWED THAT WOMEN BELONG

Women in the ancient world were not much more than property, with limited rights and a low ceiling of mobility. Yet Jesus seemed to go out of his way to communicate just how much they belonged in the story.

Stories of the woman caught in adultery; the Samaritan woman at the well; the woman with the issue of blood; the woman who had sinned much, entering a home uninvited to weep on Jesus' feet; Mary, his mother; and of course, Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast seven demons, abound. This last Mary



“THE WOMEN RETURN FROM THE GRAVE, AFTER JESUS' RESURRECTION,” JAN VAN'T HOFF

is mentioned twelve times and in all four Gospels.

So when, in Mark 16 and Luke 24, we read that Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, Salome and Joanne and “other women,” were the first human players in the drama of the resurrection and were the first to tell others the news, we sit up and take notice. This is not by accident.

In the movie *42*, based on the life of the first black major league baseball player Jackie Robinson, he is taking a lot of

NO WONDER THE WOMEN CAME ON THAT EASTER MORNING to care for the body of the one who had respected them so. But there, they discovered that the story was not over, and their story was not over either.

insults from the crowds, and then the Dodgers play in Cincinnati. Perhaps the event is only apocryphal, but it makes a point. With family and friends from Kentucky in the stands to see the game, shortstop Pee Wee Reese walks to second base and puts his arm across Robinson's shoulder and says of his racist family and fans, "I need them to know who I am."

An apparently off-handed gesture that was packed with meaning. As we read the narratives, we realize it wasn't just accidental that the women came to the tomb and were the first to hear of his resurrection and the first to tell others. Jesus was making a point.

SHOWING RESPECT THROUGH ACCESS, AFFIRMATION, AND ATTENTION

Whatever else he was doing, he was showing respect, and this respect was defined by three behaviors that we might learn from. The first was *access*, illustrated by Jesus going to them and by inviting them to come to him. He went to the Samaritan woman and allowed the woman who had sinned much to come to him. Here at the tomb, in the greatest moment of recorded history, the women came to him and he to them.

The second is *affirmation*. They were chosen for these parts. Remember our Lord saying to the woman caught in adultery, "neither do I condemn you," or the way he calls the disciples over as the widow gives her mite, and says in effect, "watch this." Jesus affirms those he calls.

Third, he gives them *attention*. They knew he saw them—really saw them. Looking down from the cross he saw his mother and instructed John to care for her. He called the woman who had touched his garment to come to him. And then there was Mary Magdalene, a woman mentally ill with seven demons, but Jesus saw her and cared for her.

These three elements show up again in the resurrection narratives—*access*, *affirmation*, *attention*. They were not extras with no speaking parts. Their presence shouted a new way, his kingdom way, of understanding the *imago dei*.

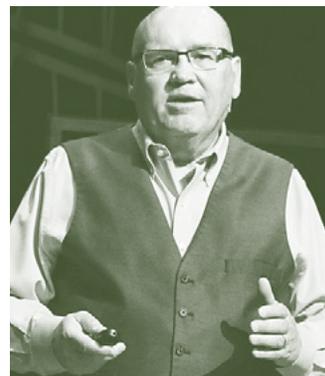
No wonder they came on that Easter morning to care for the body of the one who had respected them so. But there, they discovered that the story was not over, and their story was not over either.

Respect is a powerful emotion. When the disenfranchised laborers of 18th century England realized that John Wesley really cared for them, enough even to preach outdoors—unheard of—so they could hear the Gospel, they came by the thousands.

The image is sustained in the movie version of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, when the black people in the balcony of the courtroom, watching Atticus Finch unsuccessfully but diligently defend a black man, stand as he walks out. Though he lost his case, they saw respect and they gave it.

A few years ago as I prepared to go to my 50th high school reunion, I reflected on my high school experience and had to own that there were some students who were not treated with respect, were not treated as persons of value, were not given a seat at the table. One young man came to mind and I asked the Lord for the opportunity, however small, to treat him with respect during the weekend. Most of our small class of twelve and spouses were sitting around a table at a larger event when this former student and his wife entered. I realized that there were no chairs left at the table, and though the crowd was large I jumped up to locate two chairs so they could sit at the table without hunting down their own chairs. Small, I know. But I wanted to show respect and in showing it, acknowledge the shift in my own spirit; a recognition of value, even if late.

We are often blind. But Jesus was not. He gave access, affirmation, and attention. And the women knew it. And then, beyond any expectation, there was the resurrection event and they were in the middle of it. 2,000 years later, we are still reading their names. Powerful!! 



DERRY LONG (Ph.D., University of Birmingham) is Professor of Christian Leadership at YTI and has served in ministry for over 45 years in many roles – pastor, church planter, pastoral coach, regional overseer, and international teacher.

The Apostle Peter

Lost and Alone at the Resurrection

DR. JAY SMITH

He was everything. I was nothing, and He made me something. My name is Cephas, or better “Peter”—that’s what Jesus calls me. I was, and I guess I still am a fisherman. My brother and I took over the business from my father. We live in Capernaum, a decent sized fishing village on the northern edge of Kinneret. Kinneret is a lake in Galilee; some people call it Lake Tiberias, or the Sea of Galilee; but for the Jews, it’s Kinneret. The problem with being a fisherman is that I am not a very good fisherman. Not for fish anyway. I’ve never had a good nose as to where the fish might be. That doesn’t mean that I didn’t catch fish, just not a lot, and definitely not as much as my father. It’s hard feeding my family and paying my taxes when I barely catch enough to do either. It probably doesn’t help that I have an attitude. I am not a fan of Romans or hypocritical Jews. I don’t go to Sabbath worship enough, and I tend to have a temper, and get frustrated easily. If I’m on the water and not catching fish, I lose patience and head back into Capernaum, fish or no fish.

It was on one of those “no fish” days that I met the rabbi from Nazareth. If Capernaum was not exactly a thriving metropolis, like Bethsaida or Caesarea Philippi, then Nazareth was even less: more like a spot on the dusty road to Sepphoris. Nevertheless, the word was out; there was something special about this rabbi. Now mind you, I respect rabbis. But, I don’t go out of my way to seek their advice, or curry their favor. They teach Torah, which I have known since I was a young boy, but they don’t help you fish. Except, maybe this rabbi. My brother Andrew and I were fishing one day, and not catching. About to come in, this relatively normal looking rabbi brazenly looked right at me and told me to cast my net on the other side of the boat; as if he knew some secret I didn’t know! The audacity of this rabbi. Rather than be seen as disrespectful, I thought, “OK, one last time.” You probably have guessed the rest of the story. In the next five minutes I caught more fish than I had all month. I realized that I was in the presence of someone blessed. I had never encountered a rabbi like that



“THE TEARS OF SAINT PETER,” JUSEPE DE RIBERA, 1612

one. If He was holy, I realized I was not! The rest is pretty much history.

Andrew and I put down our nets and followed him to where he was teaching. I’d never heard anything like it. Ever. His words were rich, pure, holy, peaceful, and joyful—all at the same time! It was only a matter of time before I realized that He was the answer. He had the words of life. His very presence was a healing presence. In a very mild, humble way, miracle after miracle was performed

from His hands, His voice, His person; as if He was simply a conduit for G-d. Andrew, myself and 10 other men, as well as several women, followed Him. He called us as His disciples.

Quite honestly, it was tough for me at times. When I'm in, I'm all in. I am impatient. I spoke too soon, too often, and was only right about half of the time. But I love Him. More importantly, He loves me.

After several seasons, we realized that following Him was not always easy, and indeed, was becoming more and more difficult. More and more often he befriended the sinful people, and offended the religious people. Frankly, that was something I loved about Him. On the other hand, I realized he was alienating the establishment. We had some friends in the establishment, men like the Pharisee Nicodemus, or Johanna, the wife of Herod's steward. But far more were offended, and plotting against Him.

In our last trip with Jesus to Jerusalem, we truly thought that Jesus would miraculously overthrow the people in power—Jews and Romans alike—and establish God's kingdom; but we didn't understand. Of all the disciples, Judas of Kerioth and myself understood the least. When the temple authorities came to arrest Him, I grabbed a sword, and blindly swinging in anger, I cut off the high priest's servant's ear! Beyond all grief, I followed the temple authorities and Jesus. I waited to see what would happen in the courtyard of the high priest's home with his servants. I trembled with fear. When one of the servants asked me if I was one of His disciples, I foolishly denied Him. Three times I denied Him(!!!), just as Jesus said I would. I was broken.

I was there when Jesus was brought before Pilate; I followed the angry, "black" parade to Golgotha; but I couldn't stay. I was horrified and humiliated. I was scared. What had happened? My friend John, and his brother James stayed. I could not. I had no words, only tears. I walked, no, I slinked back to Jerusalem and the upper room where we had been the night before. I was too tired to think. I awoke on Sabbath, but went neither to the Temple nor to synagogue. The other disciples eventually joined me in silence. Jesus, the Lord was gone. We slept, we wept; we did not eat or talk. The next morning, the first day of the week, we woke to a new day; a new reality.

Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went to the place where Jesus was hastily buried to treat His body with the traditional burial spices. Within minutes, they came back to our room to tell us Jesus was not dead, but alive! I ran to the tomb as fast as I could possibly run, only to find the stone rolled away, and the burial cloths astray on the floor of the

tomb. I walked away in wonder. What has happened? I did not understand. Was He dead? Had someone taken His body? Was he truly alive? How? Were the women in their right minds? And then I began to hear the stories. Jesus appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus, and disappeared before their eyes when they recognized Him at dinner. As we spoke about these things, marveling at what God was doing, He came to us. Through the door, all flesh and blood, He came to us. We saw, and touched His wounds. We knew Him and His Love.

Later, when we returned to Galilee, He revealed Himself to us at the Kinneret. I saw Him, I knew Him. He cooked for us, and ate with us. He unfolded the scriptures before us, and we finally understood. I was in awe, filled with wonder and love; yet still a bit ashamed of my denial of Him. Although I was ashamed of my own actions, I was overly burdened by the death of Judas. When Judas realized he had completely misunderstood Jesus' message and mission, he took His own life. As my shame and this grief overtook me, Jesus reached out. "Peter, do you love me?" Jesus said. "Of course, I am your friend always Jesus," I said. He asked me this three times, the same number of times I denied Him. It was brutal. I could not hold back the tears. I finally understood what He was saying. He was not chastening me, as much as He was restoring me to the task which He assigned me. It was to be a tough road. Loving people in Jesus' name: leading them, feeding them. It was the work of a man who loved God, but who knew the road ahead was going to be difficult, and may not end well. But I was ready, finally. I would still have questions, and even doubts; but I never doubted again whether He loved me, or was with me. In that knowledge and presence, I became a true "fisher of men."

Peter's story is neither heroic, nor despicable. It is the story of every man and woman today. Frail and weak, yet with great potential, each of us stand before Jesus, needing Him to make us whole, and send us out. 🌿



JAY SMITH (Ph.D., Trinity College University of Bristol) is President and Bridger Professor of Theology and Ethics at YTI. He has pastored in several states and has taught at Howard Payne University, Baylor University, and the United States Naval Academy.

The Apostle Thomas

Ashamed of Doubting?



"THE INCREDULITY OF SAINT THOMAS," CARAVAGGIO, C. 1601

REV. BRETT DESPER

After roughly 30 years of observing Roman rule here in Palestine, I can say there is one thing the Romans excel at—killing people. Yes, there are a lot of “benefits” Rome brings to the area, but these come at a cost. If you appear to be a threat to Roman rule, the Romans are happy to make sure you will never be a threat again.

Perhaps I am getting a bit ahead of myself. I am called Didymus or Thomas—both of which mean “the twin.” I was one of the 12 that Jesus chose to follow him. Since you have asked me about what happened in Jerusalem when Jesus was crucified, I will tell you some of the story in the little time I have.

Let me say we were crushed when Jesus was crucified. When we entered Jerusalem the Sunday before, it looked as if he was

finally going to claim his rightful spot upon the throne of Israel, drive out the Romans, and establish Israel as a nation once again. Yes, he had explained to all of us that he was going to die and rise again on the third day, but that was so far from what we “knew” had to happen that all of us thought he was speaking in some sort of riddle. There he was, riding into the city. Everyone was shouting “Hosanna” and laying palm branches in front of him. It surely seemed this was the “time.” He drove the merchants out of the Temple and defeated the religious leaders in their endless attempts to trap him in their arguments. The people were gathering around him and supporting him. It surely seemed that now was when he would restore the kingdom.

Then things began to take a turn none of us could have predicted. Judas betrayed Jesus to the priests, and they had Jesus arrested. From the moment his trial started, some of us were hanging around the edges of the crowd to see what would hap-

pen. Would the crowd rise up and free him? Would he defeat the priests' accusations and arguments like he always had before? As the night wore on, it rapidly became apparent that none of that would happen. As they took him to Pilate, some of us began to lose hope. But it was evident that all was lost when the priests demanded that Barabbas, an infamous thief and troublemaker, be released and Jesus put to death. Pilate himself stated several times that he found no fault in Jesus, but the crowd kept calling out for his death – even going so far as to state that they had “no king but Caesar.” And, giving in to the cries of the religious leaders and the crowd, Pilate had Jesus crucified.

Now back to my first statement. The Romans were very, very good at putting people to death. They did not crucify people in some hidden little area; no, they did it right by the roads leading into and out of town. It was a public spectacle as they wanted to make an example of the people they were crucifying. I have seen many crucifixions and nobody survives them. They even went so far as to ram a spear up through Jesus' ribs to make sure he was dead. There can really be no doubt—Jesus was dead. He was taken down from the cross and buried in a tomb that had a Roman guard stationed outside of it. It looked like the Romans were likely to come for us next. So, we hid.

To be clear, we were crushed by Jesus' death. The last few years of our lives had been dedicated to learning from him. We had seen him heal people, cast out demons, raise people from the dead, walk on water, still storms, and feed enormous amounts of people with a few fish and loaves of bread. All of our hopes and dreams of what Jesus could become vanished that day, and we were grieving.

They say that it is not unusual for people who are grieving the death of loved ones to sense that the loved ones are still near. However, I am a realist. Dead is dead. People coming back from death has only happened when great prophets (like Elijah, Elisha, and Jesus) prayed to God. The only great prophet I knew had been buried in that tomb guarded by Romans soldiers. Therefore, when some of the other disciples said that they had seen the Lord, I was extremely skeptical. I said that I would not believe unless I saw it for myself and could put my fingers

in the nail holes and my hand in the wound on his side. Eight days later, the most amazing thing happened, and it changed everything!

We were all gathered together in a house, and Jesus appeared. I have no idea how he got there, but there he was – in the flesh. He looked at me with love and opened his arms toward me. He told me to stick my hands and fingers in the wounds and see that it was really him and that he had truly risen from the dead. I was overcome with joy, reverence and, to be totally honest, a little bit of fear. I fell to my knees and cried out, “My Lord and my God!”

If you have never experienced a great weight of sorrow disappearing from you, I am not sure I can describe it very well. It was as if I was suddenly alive again after having been on the edge of death. Things Jesus had taught us before began to make a little bit more sense. Fear of what the Romans might do to us began to evaporate. People have asked me if I am ashamed of stating I would not believe unless I saw the risen Jesus for myself. I really don't know how to answer that except to say that it really doesn't matter anymore. He is alive and death has lost its hold upon the world.

There is much more to say, but I really don't have much time. I am on my way East to spread the Good News of the Kingdom, and my travelling group is leaving. There are lots of people here who know the whole story. If you want to know more, look for them and ask them to tell you. Shalom! 



BRETT DESPER (*D.Min. in process, Portland Seminary, George Fox University*) is Lecturer in Discipleship and Spirituality at YTI. An ordained minister, Brett brings 20 years of experience in education and leadership.



Inscribed

Yellowstone Theological Institute

P.O. Box 1347, Bozeman, MT 59771

406-404-1600 | yellowstonetheology.org

Jay T. Smith, President

Matthew C. Green, Editor & Designer

Kathryn Green, Assistant Editor

Dust on the Emmaus Road

KATHRYN GREEN

Parched and barren, the road stretches out long. The horizon is empty—no sign of anyone. Just like his tomb. I gaze at my feet as little clouds of dust puff up with every step I take, away. It is too much effort to lift my head and look forward. Dust to dust.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

Once, hope blossomed in my arid soul. I, even I, was going to see God's promises come to life! At least, that was what I thought. But then, like those little puffs of dust, hope vanished. Dust to dust.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

A flurry of sound behind! What if we aren't alone out here? Fear wrings my heart, and I whip around to scan the road. My head whirls like the dust devil that stings my eyes as it wheels past. Dust to dust.

My sudden movement almost makes me crumple to the dust. Grief weighs on me like a dead body. Oh, the irony. There is no body. Those women found his tomb empty. What does this mean? I've been wracking my brain all day. I feel like death warmed over. Dust to dust.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

Was it only four days ago that we walked together and talked? Everything he said was so sure. He really knew. He didn't make the Law heavier like other teachers I had heard. Somehow, his teaching was light. Not like a corpse...

He knew. And he cared—about me. Dust to dust.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

"Cleopas!" "Remember how he said..." I can't bring myself to repeat his very words.

"Did you hear him tell Peter..." My question dies on my lips.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

But he's gone. Dust to dust.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

What is that I hear? The road is empty. Those can't be footsteps behind me! It's just dust—everywhere you look. ... "Cleopas, stop!" I gasp through my dust-caked throat. "A stranger is overtaking us." We stop dead in our tracks.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

Little clouds of dust puff up from his feet as he comes toward us. We should know everyone on this road. Who can he be? I try to summon a smile to hide my cringing heart as the man draws near. "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?" he asks. My quivering smile fails. Can he be serious? He's coming from Jerusalem. How can anyone come from there and not know what has taken place?!

"Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" Cleopas exclaims in bewilderment. "What things?" asks the man again, and resumes walking. Cleopas and I stumble along after him.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

Who are you? I wonder. The whole world knows what has taken place in Jerusalem lately, don't they? What other news could there be?!



Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

“Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how 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. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some 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 he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see,” Cleopas grinds to a halt.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

I slowly draw in my breath. I can’t believe Cleopas just told him about the empty tomb! What if this man is really one of the Jewish authorities? He might arrest us for hiding the body when we don’t even know where it is!

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

“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?” the stranger says.

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

Foolish? How can he call us foolish? Jesus is dead, and now we can’t even find his body!

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

“Cleopas, we’re getting near to the village and this man looks like he will go further. Ask him to stay with us!”

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

What will we do if he won’t stay? How does he know so much about our beloved teacher? What if he, too, vanishes like our teacher?

“Do you hear what he is saying? My heart feels so odd—I feel warm and excited and almost hopeful—all at the same time. Quickly, urge him to stay with us.”

Puff...vanish...puff...vanish...puff...vanish...

“Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent,” Cleopas finally says as we approach our doorway. ... The stranger enters with us.

Now we can have a whole meal with him and really discuss these things. My heart surges up within me. What else will he explain to us, I wonder? I feel an inexplicable tension building as the meal is prepared and served.

Look, he is taking bread just like Jesus used to do. He is blessing it. How can we have been so blind to what God’s Word tells us? It’s so plain when this man explains it. He is giving the bread to us.

I gasp. What is this explosion in my heart?! This is no stranger, for I recognize him! “Jesus.” ... “Cleopas, it is Jesus!” I cry.

“Where has he gone?!” Cleopas exclaims as we sit, dumbfounded. “What just happened?” we ask the empty room.

“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” Cleopas murmurs.

I jump up and run for the door. “Let’s return to Jerusalem and tell the others!” I call back to Cleopas. “This is urgent news! The tomb really IS empty. But Jesus is not like a puff of dust that vanishes as quickly as it comes. He is alive!” 



KATHRYN GREEN (M.A., Phoenix Seminary & Wheaton College) is Tutor in Diploma Studies at YTI. She brings a wealth of intercultural experience, with a background that includes serving in overseas missions and teaching in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

SUMMER 2022 CLASSES

BOZEMAN, MONTANA

REGISTER AT YTHI.ORG

IN-PERSON @ YTI, 2030 Stadium Dr., Bozeman
DISTANCE LEARNING available live online via Zoom

JULY 11-15

Basic Leadership: A Servant and Collaborative Approach

9AM-4PM | DR. DERRY LONG | LED 531

The Biblical Narrative

9AM-4PM | DR. BILL FOWLER | BIB 530

Spiritual Formation

9AM-4PM | REV. BRETT DESPER | SPR 530

Reading Augustine's Confessions Today

EVENINGS | DR. MATTHEW DREVER | THEO 630

JULY 18-22

Christian Vocation

9AM-4PM | REV. JIM KEENA | MIN 530

Apologetics: Speaking of Christ in a Pluralistic World

9AM-4PM | REV. CODY WHITTINGTON | CUL 531

Theology for the Church

9AM-4PM | DR. JAY SMITH | THEO 532

Inspiring Worship: The Glory of God in Christian Art & Music

6-9PM | MS. CAROL MEALER, REV. KURT CADDY, REV. TRACIE JERNIGAN | CUL 630



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Bozeman, MT 59771

P.O. Box 1347

Theological Institute

YELLOWSTONE