

Now What?

Facing Life's Disappointments When You Don't Know What to Do



"19...He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. 20 But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. 21 We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago." Luke 24:19-21 NLT

- When have you been deeply disappointed, and your first response was, "Now what?"

Life will surprise us with deep disappointments. We find ourselves staring into the face of reality, and we sigh and say, "Now what?" A relationship doesn't work out. A promotion goes to someone else. The doctor gives a devastating report. A spouse is exposed for being unfaithful. The investment is a total loss. There are hundreds of ways life smashes our dreams.

We are not alone when it comes to facing deep disappointment. The disciples had a major "now what?" moment. It is a part of the story of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The disciples thought Jesus was the Messiah and he would bring political salvation to Israel. They thought he would restore Israel to the glory days of King David. They thought he would overthrow the Roman empire and free Israel from their oppression and slavery. But then, Jesus was arrested, condemned, crucified, and buried in a tomb. Their dream of a free and glorious Israel died along with their Messiah. As the tomb of Jesus was sealed with a huge stone, they thought, "Now what?"

Three days later, they began to hear reports that Jesus was alive—that he had risen from the dead. Then, he appeared to them both individually and in large groups. During their "now what?" moment, they learned an important lesson: *God had a plan even when life appeared out of control.*

Central Lesson

When your plans collapse, look deeper into what God may be teaching you and the new direction He may be leading you.

1. The Disciples Had A **DREAM** That Jesus the Messiah Would **RESTORE** the Nation of Israel to the Glory Days of King David (Luke 24:13-21; Acts 1:6-8).

Luke 24:21 NLT *"We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago."*

Acts 1:6 NLT *"So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, 'Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?'"*

2. The Disciples Were Deeply **DISAPPOINTED** and **DISILLUSIONED** When Jesus Was Crucified and Buried in the Tomb. Their dream of a restored Israel was devastated.

Luke 24:11-12 NLT *"11 But the story sounded like nonsense to the men, so they didn't believe it. 12 However, Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb to look. Stooping, he peered in and saw the empty linen wrappings; then he went home again, wondering what had happened."*

Luke 24:21 NLT *"We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago."*

Luke 24:38-41 NLT *"38 Why are you frightened?" he asked. "Why are your hearts filled with doubt? 39 Look at my hands. Look at my feet. You can see that it's really me. Touch me and make sure that I am not a ghost, because ghosts don't have bodies, as you see that I do." 40 As he spoke, he showed them his hands and his feet. 41 Still they stood there in disbelief, filled with joy and wonder...."*

3. The Disciples Finally Understood Jesus' Mission to Bring **SPIRITUAL** Salvation to Israel and the World Only **AFTER** His Resurrection from the Dead. When life does not go as we expect, we need to *look deeper* at what God may be teaching us and the new direction He may be leading us.

Acts 1:6-8 NLT *"6 So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, 'Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?' 7 He replied, 'The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'"*

The disciples learned an important lesson - God had a plan for the death of Jesus, the Messiah. They needed to **look deeper** at what God was doing. Their dreams were too shallow. Their focus was too narrow. **God had a plan** for something much greater than the political salvation of Israel. God had a plan for the eternal salvation of a broken, sinful world. **God had a plan for their lives** - to be a witness and spread the message of salvation to the whole world (Acts 1:8). After the resurrection, the direction of their lives was different from what they had ever thought.

When our dreams are crushed, we must remember that God has a plan even when life appears out of control. God's plan is bigger and more important than our dreams. We must look deeper at what God may be teaching us and the new direction He may be leading us. God wants to use each of us individually to bring about world redemption.

Conclusion:

When your plans collapse, look deeper into what God may be teaching you and the new direction He may be leading you.

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.