



PACIFIC CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES

Tuesday 14th April 2026 at Pacific Theological College

Theme: Re-grounding the Household

What foundations must we revisit so our future is grounded in our own story and theology?

Sermon Title: Re-grounding the Household: Returning to Our Story in Christ

Biblical Reading Luke 24:13–35 (The Road to Emmaus)

Christ is Risen! **He is Risen indeed! Halleluiah!**

I greet you in the name of the risen Jesus —

I acknowledge God —
Creator of the ocean,
Creator of the land,
Creator who was already present among our peoples

I honour the Fonua of this place...
and I acknowledge the First Peoples of the lands we come from —
from Kanaky, to Aotearoa, to Australia, to the islands across our Blue Pacific.

I give thanks to the Pacific Conference of Churches,
the Moderator and General Secretary,
for hosting us in this important gathering.

I bring greetings from the Uniting Church in Australia,
and from those joining me in this meeting.

I come as a daughter of the Pacific —
with Tongan and Māori heritage.
Those stories shape how I read Scripture,
How I understand the church,
and how I hear the Spirit in this moment.

Growing up in Aotearoa,
my grandmother taught us that in Māori culture,
Before you speak, you must locate yourself.
You name your mountain.
You name your river.
You name your ancestors.
You name your people.
This is whakapapa.

You don't begin with your opinion.
You begin with your pepeha, your belonging.
You don't begin with where you're going.
You begin with where you come from.

Identity comes before direction.



Story comes before strategy.
Foundation comes before the future.

This is also true in my Tongan heritage.
When we meet someone, we ask: "Where do you come from?"
Not just the country — but the village, the family, the land that holds your story.

Because to know where you come from
is to understand who you are.

And if you forget where you come from,
You lose your grounding.

Luke 24 is a story about people who have lost their sense of grounding.

Two disciples are walking away.
From Jerusalem.
From their community.
From hope.

They are grieving.
Confused.
Disoriented.

And they say:

**"But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel."
(Luke 24:21)**

They thought they understood the story, but now it no longer makes sense.

There is something else in this moment.
The disciples tell the story —
but they don't fully understand it.

They interpret what has happened one way,
but Jesus gently opens the Scriptures to help them see differently.

And I wonder whether this may also be true for us.

Perhaps we do not yet see clearly.
Perhaps we are still interpreting this moment
through our own expectations.
Perhaps Christ is still opening the Scriptures
so we might understand more deeply.

Re-grounding the household may also require humility —
to listen,
to learn,
and to allow Christ to reshape how we see.

And I wonder if this is where the Pacific church finds itself today.



We've read in our papers that we are living in a kairos moment.
Our islands face rising seas and uncertainty about the future.
Families are strained by migration and labour mobility.
Some of our communities are grappling with the pain of drugs and violence.
And many of our churches are asking who we are becoming.

The question before us is not simply what we do next —
but who we are.

When the church forgets who it is,
it begins to borrow its voice from elsewhere.

It follows agendas not shaped by its people.
Too often Pacific and Indigenous voices
are called upon for stories,
but not always listened to for direction.

We find ourselves adjusting
to those with resources,
rather than beginning
from our own theology and wisdom.

And we respond to issues
without grounding ourselves in Christ.

Slowly... the household loses its centre.

Jesus meets them on the road.

He comes alongside them.
He walks with them.
He listens to them.

And then Luke tells us:

**“Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets,
he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.”
(Luke 24:27)**

Jesus reconnects them with God's story — restoring their whakapapa.
He helps them see that even amid confusion, God is still at work.

But notice where this happens.
Not in Jerusalem.
Not in the centre.
But on the road — with those who are leaving.

The risen Christ meets them in uncertainty,
in grief,
in the in-between space.

Christ is already walking with them.
They simply do not recognise him yet.



The risen Christ does not wait for them to return —
He meets them where they are.

As he opens the Scriptures,
Their understanding begins to change.

Their hearts begin to burn.

Their eyes begin to open.

And they recognise that Christ
has been with them all along.

They later say:

**“Were not our hearts burning within us
while he was talking to us on the road,
while he was opening the scriptures to us?”
(Luke 24:32)**

Their hearts burn
because Christ is making sense of their story once more.

Then they reach the table.
They invite Jesus to stay.
He takes bread.
He blesses it.
He breaks it.

And Luke tells us:

**“Then their eyes were opened, and they recognised him.”
(Luke 24:31)**

Recognition happens in the household.

At the table.

When we break bread.

In shared life.

This is deeply Pacific.

The household is where we listen to one another.
The household is where we take responsibility for one another.
The household is where elders and young people walk together.
The household is where Christ is recognised among us.

Then something decisive happens.

They get up.
They turn around.
They return.



They act.

Luke tells us they returned to Jerusalem —
back to the others,
back to the community,
back to the household.

*Remember, they were walking away.
Now they return to the household.*

Recognition leads to action.
Understanding leads to movement.
Re-grounding leads to change.

Re-grounding changes direction.

And I wonder if the same may be true for us.

Where might we need to turn again?
Where might we need to return —
to one another,
to our shared story,
to Christ, already walking with us?

Because the future of the household
may not begin with moving further ahead,
but with turning together
towards Christ.

Because when we turn toward Christ,
We rediscover what holds the household together.

The Gospel of Luke reveals to us the foundations of the household.

We are grounded in belonging — knowing where we come from and to whom we belong.
We are grounded in story — as Christ opens the Scriptures and reminds us of God's faithfulness.
We are grounded in relationship — as the risen Christ walks with us along the road.
And we are grounded in community — recognising Christ at the table together.

When these foundations hold,
The household stands.
And the church becomes a place
where Jesus Christ is recognised again.

Famili, let us return to our story in Christ.

May we locate ourselves again — together, not alone —
as one household, walking the road with Christ.

May we recognise Christ already among us
and move forward
grounded in the risen Lord Jesus.



In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.



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