

Ta-dah & Ah-hah! God Moments

Cathie Kelso

Wall Street United Church - January 25, 2026

Luke 24:13-35 NLT

Two of Jesus' followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, near Jerusalem, and were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. But God kept them from recognizing him. Jesus asked them, "What are you discussing so intently?"

With sadness written across their faces, one of them replied, "You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn't heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days. Things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth."

"He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. But our priests and religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel.

"Then some women from our group came with an amazing report. They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! And sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said."

Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?" Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

By this time, they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey, and they begged him to stay the night with them. Later, as they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them.

Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment Jesus disappeared!

They said to each other, "Didn't our hearts burn within us as he talked with us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" And within the hour they were on their way back to Jerusalem to tell the eleven disciples and the others who had gathered with them, that "The Lord has really risen!"

As I walked through the Gym during tea, coffee & treats time last Sunday after church, I was amazed at just how many people I don't know! In my years working here in the office, I knew or connected with just about everyone, old and new. But not so much today. It's so easy to lose touch!

In my introduction I mentioned that I've been doing this "Licensed Lay Worship Leader" thing for 25 years now, and I've led services in many small town and rural churches all over

Eastern Ontario. I need to encourage you and remind you just how amazing it is that this church continues to grow! So many other churches are declining. Just last week we received another 9 new members! As most of us already know, Wall Street is a pretty special place.

Now I want us to do this all together. (If you're watching from home or later in the week, you can do it too!) You can stand up if you want to, or stay seated — however your comfortable. Now hold your hands on your chest and throw them out ... and at the same time say **Ta-dah!** Ready? Let's do it together. **Ta-dah!** ... Hey, with more feeling!.... **TA-DAH!**

Kind of feels good, doesn't it? ... Gives you a lift! Take a look around. Everyone is smiling!

Can you think of something that you've accomplished that you've done all by yourself ... and was something that made you feel good? That even made you feel proud of yourself? And you're excited to say to others ... look what I've done! When we celebrate these things we've done all by ourselves, I like to call these **Ta-dah** moments! Look, I did it!

Here's an example. A couple of years ago I went to one of those Paint Party Fundraisers. They're pretty popular and I'd always wanted to go to one, but not because I felt overly talented or crafty. Everything you need to paint is supplied, including a picture to try to duplicate, and someone artsy to tell you how to do it. This is my result! **Ta-dah!** This is what I accomplished ... all on my own... Yes, there were directions, but I had control of the brush!



Sometimes our special, **ta-dah** moments are not as meaningful to others as they are to us. 😊 At first I hung my creation proudly on my kitchen wall, but when I pointed it out, there was mostly 'silence' and questioning looks from my friends. (Eventually I got the hint.) It's funny how much praise I got when I moved my beautiful '**ta-dah**' artwork to my laundry room and used it to cover up the holes on the back wall! Just last week another friend was visiting my downstairs facilities, (in my laundry area) and she mentioned that my picture looked like hairy armpits! I invited her to come today when I was talking about my creation, and she said "You're not going to show it to other people, are you?" 😊 Hmnnn.

Well enough about my painting skills. I'd better cover it up again. (I don't know where I'm going to move it now!)

You know God created us, each with specific gifts and talents, and God gave us the ability to think and the free will to make choices for ourselves. It's more than okay for us to experiment and try things out; to have some fun, like at a paint night... and even to celebrate our perceived successes.

I think God rather enjoys watching some of the things we get ourselves into. Most times harmless, even though sometimes challenging.

But how about the times when our plans, our **ta-dah** decisions don't have the results we thought they should have? When things don't work out and we don't know why it's all wrong or how it could have been better? Maybe these are the times that God wants us to ask Him to help? To guide us. Especially with those decisions that have more of an impact on our lives.

And then there are the times when God sees us struggling and steps in to help us anyway, even when we haven't asked.

Have you ever had a time when you realized that someone bigger than yourself... a force beyond your understanding or your ability to plan... has intervened in your circumstance and brought about something pretty amazing? A time when you recognized that God had been at work for you all along? ... Well I like to think of these times as **Ah-hah** moments! Say it with me... with feeling.... **Ah-hah!**

An **ah-hah** moment can be kind of like an epiphany... a revelation ... like a light being turned on, helping you to see something you didn't see before ... whether a physical sighting or a spiritual revelation. **Ah-hah** moments can happen instantly ...but also at times when you think back and you realize that God has been working all along in your situation. Maybe not in the way you planned (*leading to that **Ta-dah** party*) but accomplishing so much more than you'd ever dreamed of doing on your own.

A personal experience. I'm looking back at probably one of my very first God, **Ah-hah** moments ...

At the time I had been working for 26 years at Hathaway Shirt Factory in Prescott. It was mostly a piece work, '*go fast all the time*' environment, and I had developed a repetitive elbow injury. I'd been going to the doctor and doing what I was told, but my employer had lost patience with my lack of healing and put conditions and ultimatums on my employment, which included threatening to let me go if I didn't comply.

My doctor had told me not to return to those job duties because I would be hurt even more, and 'work' said I would come back to this job ... or else!! To say I was stressed was an

understatement.

All of this was happening early on in my faith journey, and it was fairly new to me to have friends offering to pray with me. These friends helped me to learn an important lesson of trusting my situation to God. In our prayer time they led me to: “Give God my job; my finances; my future. Just give the whole situation to God!”

The next day God gave me the strength to *not* give in to the conditions work was demanding. As stressed as I was, I had to believe that whatever happened, God would help me. That same afternoon I got a call from work, offering me a new, less physical and more suitable job in the plant, with absolutely zero conditions. It was a complete turnaround of the previous position they had taken!

My friend was driving me to the doctor later that afternoon, and said to me: “Wow, that’s pretty awesome how God worked that out for you isn’t it?” I still remember the feeling; the rush that went through me when she said that. In that first **Ah-hah** moment I realized that God had been at work on my behalf.

There was NO doubt in my mind that God had everything to do with this solution! When work plans and my plans intermingled with God’s plans, well that result was so much better, and was the only way any of it made any sense.

For those of you, newer Wall Streeters, or those watching from afar, we have an evening Sunday service at Wall Street called Celebrate Life. We are only meeting once a month right now but will hopefully regroup with a more regular schedule soon.

The theme at Celebrate Life has traditionally focused on recovery. Our recovery over life challenges and hurdles; over our ‘hurts, habits and hangups’.

Our speakers share about their life struggles and how God has, and continues to guide them through them. At Celebrate Life **“Ah-hah”** moments are a regular thing. Our speakers realize that God, our higher power, has intervened and given them the strength and tools and guidance to see them through. They share their positive experience to build and encourage us, because **ah-hah moments** give us all faith and hope to go on and are meant to be celebrated.

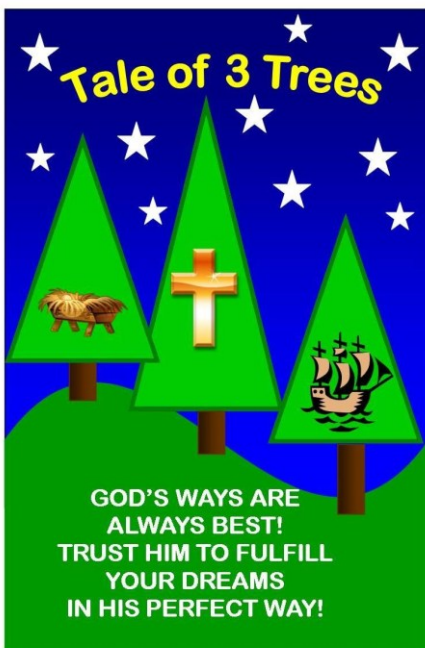
And we even have a section of our service dedicated to what we call God Sightings (another way of saying **Ah-hah** moments) where we each get the chance to tell how we have seen God at work in our life or somewhere in our community in recent days.

Sometimes in the middle of our situations, it's hard to see God at work ...but it's so cool when we look back, and realize how God has laid out the steps for us and guided us ahead.

In this morning's scripture lesson, we heard one of many Bible Ah-hah moments. In Luke 24 we heard about two followers of Jesus who were walking on the road to Emmaus, and talking about all the events around Jesus' death, and trying to make sense of it all. Then, out of nowhere, Jesus was with them on the road — but they didn't recognize him. When they arrived home, they invited him to stay for dinner. That's when everything changed.

As Jesus broke bread with them, he brought back memories of what he had said and taught earlier. And their eyes were opened and they had a huge **"Ah-hah!"** moment. They realized they were sitting with Jesus! In awe they later said; *"Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"*

I'd like to share this popular illustration that you may have seen on the Internet before:
Called the *"The Legend of the Three Trees"*.



Once upon a time, long, long ago, there were three baby trees growing up in the forest. One was an olive tree, one an oak, and the third, a pine tree. They talked and began to grow.

The olive tree told the others that when he grew up, he planned to have his beautiful wood made into a treasure chest, decorated with sparkling jewels.

"That's nothing" sad the oak, "When I grow up, I plan to be a mighty tree with strong sturdy wood just right for building a huge ship ... a ship so wonderful that Kings and Queens would be carried across the oceans of the world. The pine explained that it was his dream to grow to be a tall, majestic pine that would stay on the mountainside forever and point people to God in heaven.

The years went by and these trees grew and grew. Finally, the day came when it was time for them to fulfill their destiny. They grew excited as they anticipated their long-awaited dreams coming true.

Let's pause for a minute.... So far all the things the trees have mentioned are **ta-dah** things! Look what I'm planning to do ... or see the purpose I've dreamt for me! But God had a far better plan for each of them than they had ever imagined. As the story continues, let's watch for God's better, beautiful, rich, fulfilling **Ah-hah** purpose for each of them.

The story continues: The beautiful olive tree did not become a treasure chest but became a feeding box for animals. In that MANGER a virgin mother laid the greatest treasure of all time — God's only Son, Jesus. **Ah-hah!** The oak tree did not become a mighty ocean-going vessel. It became a fishing boat which carried Jesus, the KING of Kings. **Ah-hah!**

The tall pine did not stay on the mountainside, but was cut down and made into a rough wooden cross. On that cross Jesus died to save people from their sins. And ever since, that cross has POINTED the way for people to find God. **Ah-hah!**

So much better! ... Not one of the trees got what they planned. But each one of them got more than they could have hoped for.

So, you see, God's ways and plans are not always our ways, but His ways are best for us. Let's be open to the plans that God has for us. Let's look for how God has worked and is working in our lives. Let's ask God to walk with us and work for us in everything we do.

Let's not fear the *now*, but look to the future... trusting in God to make all things right...
1 Corinthians 2: 9 (CEV). "What God has planned for people who love Him is more than eyes have seen, or ears have heard. It has never even entered our minds!"

Thanks be to God! *Amen.*