

On the Road to Emmaus
Series: We Have Seen Jesus
Luke 24:13-34
April 8, 2018

It's great to be together today for worship on this first Sunday after Easter, after the resurrection. Actually, every Sunday is Resurrection Sunday. That's why we worship on Sunday instead of Saturday. We celebrate every Sunday Christ's victory over sin, hell and the grave. We celebrate that God's plan for salvation has been realized. We celebrate that Jesus was crucified, He died, and was buried, yet the third day, He arose from the dead and now is seated as the right hand of the Father in Glory.

That's what we know now, but for those followers of the traveling preacher from Nazareth, the one they believed was the Messiah, the days following the crucifixion were nothing but heart-wrenching, painful, sorrow-filled days. Their hope and dreams for a better future seemed completely destroyed by the very power they hoped Jesus would defeat: the Romans.

For the next few weeks, we will examine what it was like to see Jesus, to experience Him, after His followers' hopes and dreams seemed smashed, and how we might see Jesus when our world seems to be crumbling to the ground.

Today, I want to look at an incident on Easter Sunday, the story of what happened when He walked with two of His followers on the road to the village of Emmaus, and let us consider what can happen when we walk with Jesus. I invite you to turn to page 5 in your bulletin. As you are turning to that, I'm so excited that in 2019, we are returning to the Holy Land, and this time, we are going to Emmaus. It's going to be tremendous, life changing. You want to begin to make plans to join Myra and myself. There are brochures out in the lobby.

Ok, back to the original road to Emmaus. Visualize for a moment the scene of a bright Sunday afternoon as two men stroll along on their way home to their village. Can you imagine their confusion, mixed with excitement, as they consider the events of the past week? The triumphant entry of their Master into the city of Jerusalem. His last Passover meal with His followers and the institution of His Supper. His betrayal and His arrest in the garden and the fearful fleeing of His followers. The terrible trials before Pilate and Herod. Peter's denial. We can be sure that the word of all this had gotten around to those who were His followers. Then the terrible dark and earth shaking day of His crucifixion. And now, they are hearing all these rumors about resurrection. What are they supposed to think about these things?

Just at the moment they are in deep discussion about the possible meaning of all this, they become aware of a third person who has, from their viewpoint, evidently just overtaken and joined them on their walk. There seems to be nothing unusual about this. Evidently such casual meetings on a walk were common place. Apparently there was nothing in His manner or opening conversation that was special. That is until this stranger begins to join in their ongoing discussion. He then gradually begins to lead it and to explain everything to them.

I want to share four things that can happen as these two men and we followers of Christ 2,000 years later, walk with Jesus.

First, When we are willing to walk with Jesus, He will walk with us.

Luke 24:15 tells us:

*As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them;*¹

In Matthew 18:20, Jesus tells us of His desire to have fellowship and communion with us.

*For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.*²

No one was ever meant to go through the trials of life alone. You, me, no one. Yet so many in our world who do not follow Christ face that frightening and lonely reality. Christians often comment, "I don't know how people go through what I have gone through, whether it is cancer or a miscarriage or the death of a loved one or long-term disability or a wayward child. How do they go on without Christ?" And the answer is, "They don't. A piece of their life, their soul, dies or is scarred or mutated until they are not the same. They are hopeless, bitter, defeated."

But not the believer who is willing to walk with Jesus. They find that Jesus is walking with them. They are not defeated by the loss and evil of life, but come through triumphant. They sing boldly the words of the great hymn:

*But "I know Whom I have believed,
And am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I've committed
Unto Him against that day."*³

All because we are willing to walk with Jesus. He walks with us.

Second, When we walk with Jesus, He will teach and guide us.

It would be well to note what was not happening here. These two followers were not discussing getting vengeance for a horrible and unjust murder of a holy man. They were not considering organizing a protest to storm the precincts of the Chief Priest or Pilate to right this wrong. They were not discussing unjust social, religious or political conditions. They were not trying to foment some sort of revolution.

As we look at these two walking along before Jesus joins them, even with all their doubts and fears, we see they were seeking the ultimate truth about the Savior. They were communing and reasoning about the Savior. They were considering spiritual things.

How often do we just casually and naturally talk about or really communicate about Jesus? How often, on the other hand, do we "fellowship" around more mundane matters. Just pause and listen sometimes to the things being discussed by believers. Even after they have come together in worship and praise of the Lord. The weather, politics, sports, the latest movie or restaurant seem to be popular areas of consideration. There's nothing intrinsically wrong with that.

These two on the road to Emmaus, however, were sincere truth seekers. So as they were walking, Jesus patiently explained it all to them. Notice how He introduces the truth and Himself to them. He begins and ends with Scripture.

*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*⁴

¹ Luke 24:15 (NIV)

² Matthew 18:20 (NIV)

³ "I Know Whom I Have Believed" by Daniel W. Whittle, UM Hymnal #714.

⁴ Luke 24:27 (NIV)

Without His teaching and guidance, we are just as spiritually blind and helpless as these on their way to Emmaus. He opened their understanding of the teachings of the Scripture and of His teaching. Holy women and men of God are guided gently along the sea of inspiration and revelation. We have the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. We have His assurance that it is all that is needed as a written guide to life for those who would walk with Jesus. But again, without His spiritual discernment and guidance, we are just as spiritually blind and helpless as these two.

If we walk closely with our Lord, we can have the same sort of discernment given to us as was given to these two when He opened their spiritual understanding and comprehension of the scriptures. For God blesses sincere truth seekers. Jesus has promised to abundantly reward real truth seekers.

*"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened."*⁵

When we walk with Jesus, He will teach and guide us.

Third, When we invite Jesus into our lives, He abides with us.

Verses 28-29:

*As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.*⁶

The conclusion of their encounter with the risen Savior is especially inspiring. Just envision it if you will. Imagine Jesus going right into their humble home and sitting down at their common table. Notice He did not force Himself upon them. He is a gentleman. He will not break down the door of your heart or force His way into your everyday life. By inviting Him into their home and life, they opened themselves to the tremendous blessing of not only dining with Him, but truly knowing Him and having all their initial doubts dispelled and fears allayed.

In Revelation 3:20, we read:

*Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.*⁷

We need to remember that all those who have been saved by His grace through faith have invited Him into their heart and their life. He also wants us to invite Him into our work places and other places, not just their homes. Our home is no longer our castle, but is to be His castle. He is to sit on the throne of every heart of every person who names Him as Savior and Lord.

If you are having a problem at work, have you invited Christ there? If you are struggling with marital problems, have you invited Christ there? If you are facing health issues, have you invited Christ there?

When we invite Jesus into our lives, He abides with us.

Finally, When we walk with Jesus, we will witness and testify of Him.

Listen to what happens to the two on the road to Emmaus when Jesus breaks the bread, then vanishes:

⁵ Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV)

⁶ Luke 24:28-29 (NIV)

⁷ Revelation 3:20 (NIV)

Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.⁸

Notice, they did not say, "Let's wait until the next time we see the apostles and the other disciples and then we can tell them about our experience with the risen Christ." No. They show a real sense of urgency. They immediately rush right off to tell the world about Jesus. Do you think if they had been more reticent, shy and hesitant with their witness, we might not even be reading about them in the Word? Their holy boldness is a consistent characteristic of those who have really been with Jesus.

What a lesson for those who are bold enough to witness in His Name! He promised in Matthew 28:20 that His presence and power are guaranteed, that He will go before us, with us, and come behind us. I would personally testify that He and His spirit have come and stood beside me again and again when I by His grace and strength boldly witnessed His Word.

It would be good to ask how many people have heard the central message of Christ truly expounded during Easter? In the midst of all the egg hunts and spring colors and Spring Break, how many have heard a clear cut challenge boldly issued for people to repent of their sins and by faith be saved by a resurrected, living Savior? If our answer to the question is very few, then what should be our response? Obviously, a redoubling of our efforts to get the whole truth and nothing but the truth to them.

The men on the road to Emmaus felt their hearts burning. Let me ask you to consider the temperature of your heart today. Is it burning for Christ? What about the temperature of this church's heart? Are we satisfied with what we have here and who is part of this family, or does our heart burn for others who are lost, destroyed and downtrodden?

⁸ Luke 24:31-35 (NIV)