

Lenten Series: “Emmaus: Walking with Jesus”

Sermon #2: “Sharing the Road”

Scriptures: Luke 24:13-24

Text: “Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus” -Luke 24:13a

Opening Video

PP#1: *Images that evoke Easter - lilies, radiant crosses, etc.*

Easter kinda feels like a distant memory, doesn't it? Three weeks ago. A lot has happened since then. Yes, we had our celebrations and big meals and family get togethers. But now we've moved back into the rhythm of life: swamped with work, struggling with our body's problems, finances still tight, relationships back to where they were. We're back “on the road again.”

That big event—Jesus' resurrection, something we claim changes everything—seems to have come and gone with little lasting impact. Here we are back on the same journey of life we had been on. Do you feel that overall weariness...that comes from just keep'n on putting one foot in front of the other? Wouldn't it be awesome if we got a little bit of Easter joy, Easter hope, for here right now? For where we are headed on our journeys this week? Perhaps that's why you're here today.

PP#2: Luke 24:9-12

When [the three women] came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. ... But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

On Easter we read together the story from Luke. And you know, the miracle that happened that morning in the Bible seems kind of, I don't know, anti-climactic. Three women get up before dawn to go to the tomb and anoint Jesus' body with spices. But when they get there, two angels tell them that Jesus is not dead, but alive. Pretty amazing, yes. But when they rush back to tell the other disciples, no one believes them! And then, get this!, everyone *just sits there!* Finally Peter goes to the tomb. John tells us that he also went with Peter. But no one else does. I mean, if this were you, and some friends came and told you that angels appeared to them and told you that Jesus was raised...*wouldn't you go to the tomb?* I would have! Then again, I grew up on a small town in North Dakota. Whenever we heard sirens, we all got into the car to do look and see what happened. Perhaps you all would have just sat there. But from judging how everyone around here rubbernecks along I-35, perhaps you would have gone, too.

But the whole Easter morning story ends with the disciples not believing, and Peter wondering to himself what had happened.

PP#3: Luke 24:13-14

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.

And evidently things didn't change much as the day went on. The next story told, even when you look at all four Gospels, the next thing that is told is that later that afternoon a couple of the disciples head home to Emmaus. Later on we hear that they arrived in Emmaus in the evening, and since it was only about a two hour walk, they must have headed out late in the afternoon.

So, the women tell their news early in the morning. Everyone, then, sits around talking about it. That's Easter! Finally—I'm imagining about four in the afternoon—two of them decided to head back home. They live close by. No reason to stick around. They were there for that first Easter, and it really does nothing for them! They, like most of us just three weeks ago, finally look at their watches around 4 p.m., and say, "Well, I suppose we should be heading home. Got to get to work in the morning. It sure was good talking with you all. Thanks for everything."

That Easter came and went for them, and seemed to have little impact. They head back to their lives. They head back to the road.

Reader: Luke 24:13-14

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened.

PP4: *Image of the two walking and talking on the road to Emmaus (without Jesus yet!)*

Who are these two disciples? Well, they are not part of the 12 apostles. But they seem to be a part of what the Bible often calls "the other disciples." There were the 12 in the close circle around Jesus, but there were many others who chose to follow Jesus as disciples, too. Some of them, it seems, lived and traveled with Jesus and the apostles. Perhaps some came and followed for a while, but might leave from time to time, as commitments required. In Luke 10, for example, Jesus sends out 72 of His disciples. So, it seems that there were quite a few at times.

Well, these two, evidently, were a part of these other disciples. One is named as Cleopas in verse 18. Now, John names one of the Marys the cross as "Mary the wife of Cleopas" (John 19:25). Perhaps this is a couple who had become followers of Jesus. Maybe his wife had headed home earlier, and now Cleopas heads there, too. The other disciple is not named, but the Early Church calls him Simon. A Simon eventually succeeded James as the head of the church in Jerusalem. This could be he. I, however, really like that the other disciple isn't named. I'll say why in a minute.

But, how about Emmaus? It seems, if you read later in the story, that at least one of the two may have lived there. But otherwise, there's no surviving historical evidence for a town named Emmaus near Jerusalem. This is not too surprising, as many of the small towns didn't survive and were lost in history. Yet the only place Emmaus is ever mentioned, anywhere, is in this story. And there is no archeological evidence that has yet been discovered.

Personally, I'm glad that this village can't be found. I'm glad because what I see going on here in this story is something that applies to all of us. We are like these two disciples. We've walked with Jesus. We've tried to believe. But Easter has come and gone, and we talk about the empty tomb, but we still wonder. And we head back into our regular, ordinary lives. Emmaus is not over there in some specific spot. Emmaus can mean, for us, right where we live. This story is our story. [Point to the screen.] This is us! This is the story of life. We are on the road again.

PP#5: Luke 24:15-17

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

but they were kept from recognizing Him.

He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"

They stood still, their faces downcast.

And then “Jesus Himself came up and walked along with them.”

People, here is the Easter message! Easter is amazing and wonderful and meaningful, not as some report that other people say, or what other people believe, or some testimony written down somewhere. Easter happens when Jesus comes up and walks with us along our way. It is important that Jesus is raised from the dead, not just to defeat sin and death as a reality happening outside of time, but it is only meaningful when Jesus comes into our time and brings that defeat over sin and death into our lives. I know we said over and over again on Easter, “Christ is risen...He is risen indeed.” But to me, why I get really excited about Easter is that “And then Jesus Himself came up and walked along with them.” The raised Jesus is a Jesus who comes along and walks along with people as they walk on their life’s journeys! Jesus is raised. That’s good news. Jesus walks with you, now that’s even better news!

PP6: *Image of the two walking and talking on the road to Emmaus, this time with Jesus!*

Do you see why I think this is our story, too? Here in this story we have what life is all about. And a crucial part of life is that you make it a shared journey. When you are on the road, you share it. If you don’t, you’ll miss Easter! Being a follower of Jesus is about companionship, relationships, sharing. The Christian life is a shared journey, a journey sharing the road “home” to God. That’s why we’ll be taking a closer look at this Emmaus Easter story over the weeks ahead. It’s about real life!

Reader: **As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus Himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing Him.**
 He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”
 They stood still, their faces downcast.

Jesus is right there with them, but they are prohibited from being able to tell who He is. This is not that they just didn’t recognize Him. They were prohibited. Why? I’ve got a pretty good idea, but we won’t see what that is for a couple of more weeks. So, you’ll have to keep coming back each Sunday to see how this develops!

But still notice, they thought He was a stranger. But what is really going on, is that *they* were the strangers. They are strangers until they receive Easter into their own lives. We’ll also see how this develops.

What were the things that had happened that they were discussing, do you think, along the way? What were they talking about? Probably still the report from the women, is my guess. They were talking about the empty tomb. “How can that be true? They must have been imagining it. You know how emotional women can get.”

Jesus enters into their experience. He listens to them. He asks about what is important in their lives.

Notice, Jesus doesn’t just come in and say, “Hey, guys, it’s me! See! I’m alive! Everything’s great! Isn’t this wonderful? Praise God!”

No. He joins them, walks with them, talks with them, and inquires into their lives. He just doesn’t want to bring them information. *He wants to bring them transformation.* He wants to bring you transformation! Notice just how downcast they are when He meets them!

PP#7: Luke 24:18-21

One of them, named Cleopas, asked Him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

“What things?” He asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed Him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified Him; but we had hoped that He was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place.”

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“How can you be so clueless?” I love that answer. “Really? What’s wrong with you? You have no idea what’s been going on? It’s the talk of the town! How could you have missed it, it all happened last Friday?”

But did you hear the line in the middle? “But we had hoped that He was the one who was going to redeem Israel.” They *had hoped*. He would change everything. Redemption.

PP#7: Luke 24:22-24

“In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find His body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said He was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

Reader: “In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find His body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said He was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.”

They are stuck on Jesus being dead. They are defeated, disheartened, feeling hopeless. Yes, the women gave an amazing report, but none of the men saw Him.” I guess that means it didn’t happen, huh? Before you knock them too hard, think back on all the times you dismissed a report because it didn’t come from sources you deemed credible. Were you ever wrong? See, this can be your story, too!

Well, we’re going to stop the story here. To really get the impact of what comes next, we need to really understand the story so far.

PP#8: Emmaus: Walking with Jesus!

Sharing the Road:

1) Emmaus is our home

I'm glad we can't pinpoint Emmaus to a place on the map. That way, for us, Emmaus can refer to our home. We struggle with our faith, and we wrestle with the truth of Easter. This story is our story. We are on the way in our daily lives. We are on the way home, both in living daily life, and as a way of describing life itself. This is your life. You are on the way.

PP#9: Emmaus: Walking with Jesus!

Sharing the Road:

- 1) Emmaus is our home
- 2) We are people of the road

Christians are people of the road. We are travelers. We travel through this life, and God has us on a path heading to our final home. We are travelers. Each day of our lives is a journey, and God has us on a path through it. Each day we need to be open to share the path. We need to allow others to join us. We need to allow room to meet Jesus as we walk.

Think about that. Do you look for Jesus on your daily path? Do you make room for Him? What would it mean for you to make more room to meet Jesus in your daily life? You don't want to miss Him. You don't want Him to remain a stranger!

Companionship is a central to being a follower of Jesus. They had room for Jesus, but they also were walking together. This is the Christian way of life. It's not just you. It's not even just Jesus and you. It is Jesus, you, and others. The relationships you foster, the time you take tending to others, these are ways that you become alive!

Usually, we see others and distractions, as nuisances, as wastes of time. When we do, we miss that the road is a shared road, and Jesus stays a stranger.

PP#10: Emmaus: Walking with Jesus!

Sharing the Road:

- 1) Emmaus is our home
- 2) We are people of the road
- 3) Jesus is our model

We see in this story Jesus as a model for how we can relate to others along the road. He joins them. He listens first. He inquires about their lives. Then, next week, we'll see how He challenges their perspective—where they are stuck—and gives them a new way of looking at it. He doesn't condemn or judge them. He challenges their stuck position. Then, we will also see, He leaves them. He let's the Holy Spirit do the work. It's not our job to keep nagging at people until they change. We affirm, we challenge, and we let the Holy Spirit do the work.

Spiritual companionship is facilitating the actions of the Spirit in the life of others.

Three weeks after Easter, we are on the road again. And this is precisely where we meet Jesus! Easter happens today, tomorrow, every day. We are people of the road, and each day we are on the road again!

PP#11: *Image of Willie Nelson*

You know, I've been thinking a lot about Jesus. But also, as I've been preparing this sermon, I've been thinking a lot about Willie Nelson! I've been singing in my head, "On the Road Again."

Well, I finally went and looked it up. You know, I think it really says what this story is about! The lyrics go, “On the road again. I just can't wait to get on the road again.”

We Christians are people of the road, and we just can't wait to get on the road each day, to meet Jesus and to live out our lives as God is leading us. This is what it means to be a Christian.

“The life I love is making music with my friends...”

There is that companion piece. We share the road. Each day we make friends, and life is making music with our friends.

“On the road again Goin' places that I've never been, Seein' things that I may never see again.”

God has an adventure for you each day. He'll take you places you've never been, and He'll show you things you may never see again! Are you ready?

“On the road again, Like a band of gypsies we go down the highway.”

We are people of the road, going down life's highway together.

“We're the best of friends” This is our comradery: with Jesus and with those He puts with us as we travel.

“Insisting that the world keep turning our way.”

We have a new message for the world, a different perspective. We don't conform to the world, we call the world to change. We have the message of hope, of life, of Jesus.

So, as you listen to this song—and hopefully it'll get stuck in your mind and you'll be hearing it in your head for days and days—let it remind you that you walk with Jesus along the way, that you have an adventure with Him each day, that you intentionally make room and time for others as you travel, and that you just can't wait to get on the road again!

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGSXaDr4JV8> (Please stop after 1:15 minutes)