

“A Walk to Remember”
Luke 24: 1-8;13-35

Introduction:

No one can forget the images associated with September 11, 2001.

I have a book sitting on my desk at my home office that shows the picture of the Twin Towers and it's titled: **The Giants that defied the Sky.**

Most of us remember exactly where we were when we heard about the first jet crashing into the World Trade Center in New York City.

I remember I was on my way to the Kirkersville U.M. Church to meet with some of the local pastors to pray, when that pastor came to me and said, “Go home and watch the news. Something terrible is happening in New York City. A Jet has just crashed into one of the Twin Towers.”

We remember the numbness we felt as we realized that thousands of people had died in the rubble of that terrorist attack.

We remember the feeling of helplessness as we watched pictures of rescue workers trying to save those still alive.

We remember the sadness and numbness as our nation mourned.

Try to imagine how you would have felt if someone had come up to you a couple of days after September 11th and said, “Hey, why so glum?”

You would have looked at the person in disbelief.

You might have asked where they had been the last few days.

How could they not know about the horror that had taken place?

Remember just a couple days prior something stunning and terrible had taken place

I think this is how it was for those two men walking to Emmaus from Jerusalem when a stranger came up to them on the road and asked, “Hey, what's up?”

The two men, one identified by the name Cleopas, were discussing the events involving Jesus that had happened in Jerusalem over the last several days.

It is likely the men were headed to their home . . . perhaps in Emmaus.

The men apparently were followers of Christ.

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In verse 21 we are told that they “had hoped that Jesus was the one who going to redeem Israel”.

In verse 24 we are told that some of “the women Mark tells us it was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Salome had amazed them.

They went to the tomb early that morning but didn’t find Jesus’ body.

Those two Marys came and told the disciples that they had seen a vision of angels, who said He was alive. “He is Risen!” Matthew 28:6 records.

You see – Easter provides us with the one question we cannot ignore.

What do we do with an empty tomb?

What do you do when we search the cave only to find the doorway wide open, the grave clothes lying disheveled to the side, and only the faint smell of spices in the air?

You see – catch this these men from Emmaus continued to tell the stranger these words,

“Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”

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It appears that **these two men**, though not among the twelve disciples, apparently were **part of the inner circle of disciples**.

This morning I want you to see **a few things about this walk to remember.**

The 1st - THE MEN WERE DISCOURAGED

The first thing we notice is that the men were discouraged.

They had followed Jesus thinking that He was going to make life better.

They thought He was the long-anticipated Messiah.

They believed He was going to redeem Israel.

In other words, they believed that Jesus was going to set Israel free from Roman domination.

They thought Jesus was the one who would bring God’s blessing back to Israel.

And now the missing body confirmed the doubts they’d had all along – just another hoax or another fanatic with some magic up his sleeves.

They had this hope, at least, until He was put to death.

He was crucified by the very powers they believed He would overcome.

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Boy, were they disappointed

Perhaps they were disappointed that Jesus didn't do something miraculous.

He seemed to die without a fight.

Notice something.

The men were in Jerusalem when they heard the report of the empty tomb **yet they still left town!**

Let me ask you - Wouldn't you have thought they would have hung around to find out what actually happened?

These men were so discouraged that they assumed that someone had either stolen the body of Jesus, or the women were confused and they weren't telling the truth.

They didn't have the energy to hope for more.

Spiritual Application:

Friends - When we are discouraged in life, it is easy to lose our perspective.

It's easy to focus on the negative.

So often we just throw up our hands and quit.

These men were so preoccupied that they didn't recognize Jesus as He walked beside them.

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The text tells us that they were ***“kept from recognizing Him.”***

Let me ask you:

- Did their discouragement blind them to the Savior or
- Did the Holy Spirit blind their eyes so the Lord could instruct them without the distraction of being recognized?

Have you ever known spiritual discouragement? Sure you have!!

Maybe you have been where these men were.

Maybe you are at that point right now.

- **The marriage** you thought would last forever has fallen apart.
- **The job** you loved and trusted to prepare you for retirement is lost in a cost cutting move.

I have a very close friend. As a matter of fact, Mark is my daughter's father-in-law.

Mark was a very good engineer. He had served in his job for 30 some years.

And when it came time for them to down-size, he was let go.

And today can't find a job to pay what he needs because he is over qualified. Does this sound familiar?

Maybe you're discouraged today because

- **The body** that was always a source of pride to you is beginning to fall apart. Some of you know that all too well – and it hurts.
- **Your joy over a pregnancy** results in a miscarriage, a stillborn death, or physical problems in the mother or child.
- You work long hours and still can't seem to make ends meet
- You put your faith in someone but they let you down

Listen to me friend,

- In each case, the excitement you once felt about your faith turns into a “blah” feeling of doubt and wondering if God really cares at all.
- Discouragement is often a part of your life.
- But friend, hear me – that doubt and wondering if God really cares is nothing more than a trick of the enemy.
- God does care and He does Love you!

But please see that it's possible that in your time of discouragement **Jesus is walking by your side. . . you just don't see Him yet. But He's there!**

2nd - THE LORD WAS PATIENT

Notice the patience of the Lord.

1) Jesus met them were they were.

I think if I had been Jesus I would have run up to those guys and said, “Hey, guys, guess who?”

Maybe, after they told me about their day, I might have spread my arms wide and shouted, “Ta-Dah! Look who's here!”

That's not what Jesus does.

He listened to their complaints.

He took time to understand their discouragement.

He didn't yell at them, He didn't rebuke them, nor did He make fun of them.

He met them at their point of understanding and started from there.

Spiritual Application:

Friends, listen to me - Jesus understands where you are in your life.

He knows exactly what your struggles are.

He understands your heart.

He comes to you where you are and relates to you with kindness, compassion and love.

- 2) Next we see the patience of our Lord also in the fact that **He explained to them the plan of God.**

Do you understand and know that God has a plan for your life?

It says in verses 27, “***And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.***”

You see understand with me -

It was not enough that these men believe that Jesus had arisen from the dead; **they needed to understand why He died in the first place.**

We are told, “***beginning with the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.***” (v. 27)

It's good for us to be reminded on this Easter Sunday some of those things:

Whatever Jesus talked to them about, the point was the same: **God's plan has been the same from beginning to end.**

The death of the Messiah was not a surprise, it was part of God's plan of redemption for mankind and new life for mankind.

News reporters today present their “investigative” reports on the Christian faith.

In their reports, they are always with consistent distortion, presenting the Christian message as something fairly haphazard.

In the Columbus Dispatch this last week, they ran a front page article entitled: **Scholars debate the Literal Truth of the Resurrection.**

When asked about the truth of the Resurrection, John Dominic Crossan said, “The honest answer must be, I do not have the faintest idea, nor does anyone else.”

Let me go on record this morning to John Dominic Crossan or anyone else they can't answer for me, because I believe in the Resurrection of our Lord.

Listen to me people – There is nothing haphazard about the message of Christ.

The Bible is consistent in pointing to Christ as the only way of salvation.

- 3) His patience is also revealed because **Jesus did not force Himself upon them.**

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Look at verse 28. We are told that, ***“As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther.”***

But in verse 29, 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.***”

If these men had not invited Him into the home, they would not have learned about the resurrection until some time later.

You see sir – ma’am, listen to me, this is the Key to your genuine relationship with Christ. **YOU HAVE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO INVITE HIM INTO YOUR LIFE AND HOME.**

They may never have seen and talked to the risen Christ.

Spiritual Application:

Friends, listen to me -

This is the way the Lord works.
He does not barge into our lives.
He does not badger us.
He’ll speak to us through His Word,
He’ll speak to us through other believers, and
He’ll speak to us sometimes through the still voice in our hearts.
But He patiently waits for us to receive Him into our hearts and lives.

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3rd - THE RESURRECTION CHANGED EVERYTHING

The Resurrection evoked contrasting responses from those who encountered it.

Wouldn’t you have loved to have been at the dinner table that night?

I mean think about this for a moment.

I wish I knew what happened. Why did Jesus take the bread and give thanks?

What was it about this act that caused them to recognize Him?

Did they see the nail prints in His hands?

Did the prayer remind them of the prayers of Jesus they had heard before?

Was it simply a matter of God’s Spirit choosing that at that moment to open their eyes to reality of Christ’s presence?

Can you get this picture in your mind and imagine the wide-eyed wonderment of recognition?
As soon as they recognized Him, He’s gone! Wow!

Don’t you bet that they looked at each other and said somewhat warily, ***“Did you see what I saw?”***

vv. 30-31 30"When He was at the table with them, He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, and He disappeared from their sight."

As it dawned on them, I'm sure they couldn't help but grin, laugh, cry, hug each other, and maybe do a little Jewish dance!

4th - What did they do? They returned to Jerusalem.

Remember verse 28? They said to Jesus, ***"Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over."***

However, when they realized that it was Jesus in their home, **they no longer cared about the time of day.**

They made the seven-mile trip back to Jerusalem because the news was so great!

Do you want to bet the trip back to Jerusalem took a lot less time than the trip from Jerusalem?

5th - Despair was Replaced by Joy.

When the two men arrived back in Jerusalem they found the disciples and other believers who had gathered.

The room was filled with excitement.

They were talking about an appearance of Jesus to Peter (in addition to Mary Magdalene).

The two men from Emmaus told their story and the room became even more alive.

The room that just hours before had been filled with sadness and gloom, now was filled with joy and celebration!

What made the difference?

Jesus is alive!

These disciples who were hiding from the world, now were eager to share the gospel with the world.

Hope replaced despair, boldness replaced fear, confidence replaced confusion, and sorrow was erased by celebration.

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I remember Jimmy who was a little boy in Sunday School back when I was working in a small church in college.

This particular Sunday there were 6-8 kids in attendance. I sensed sadly that the story of Jesus was unfamiliar to them.

I told about some of the great things he did in His life. I told them how people hated Jesus and killed Him on a cross.

It was obvious that Jimmy had never heard the story before. He started to cry. I said, "Hang on Jimmy, the story isn't over yet."

I told him about the resurrection of Jesus. Jimmy with more understanding than many in the church today, broke into a huge smile and pumped his fist into the air!

That's what was happening in the room that night.

While they were still discussing these things, Jesus appeared among them.

He showed them His hands and feet and even ate some food (showing He was not a ghost).

He opened the Scriptures to them and I suspect answered dozens of questions so they could

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understand the plan of God. It must have been a wonderful reunion.

CONCLUSIONS

The story of the men on the road to Emmaus is a great story.

It is fun to imagine what this walk to remember was like.

But we must also ask: what does it all mean for us? Is this simply a great story, or does it have practical relevance for our daily living?

You see – I wish we were all like Jimmy. Jimmy and younger children like Jimmy have such child-like faith to believe in the Messiah, Jesus who can forgive us of our sins.

But the problem is – The older we get, the more difficult it becomes to believe in a God who does resurrections.

We grow up and experience the limitations of life and the pain of death.

Eventually we decide it's really hard to live out of wonderment.

It's easier to live out of doubt.

Let me suggest some lessons to you.

The Resurrection is Real.

I don't need some journalist to tell me it's not.

Eyewitnesses saw Him, talked to Him, ate with Him, and learned from Him.

Jesus was physically and bodily back from the dead.

It isn't figurative . . . it's real. It isn't a story; it's history.

This one fact of history changes everything,

- We can be forgiven for the sins and the scars of our past
- We don't have to fear death because He has shown it is not the end – There is eternal life beyond our physical death.
- Though we mourn the death of spiritual loved ones, we do not do so without hope.
- Though there are times when the world seems to have the upper hand, **we know God is still in control.**

Are you going through a time of discouragement in your life?

Life is confusing.

The future is uncertain.

Each morning you wake up weighted down by the burden you bear.

Do you understand that the message of Easter is the message you need to hear and comprehend?

It is the perfect antidote to discouragement. You can leave here today not being discouraged.

The resurrection proclaims,

- Our Savior has overcome life's greatest barrier . . . so He can also help you.
- God is patient and knows the best way to help you in your time of need; He will not give up on you even though you are tempted to give up on yourself.
- God has a purpose.
- It is His purpose to help you grow to be what the Lord created you to be.
- The circumstances of your life cannot take you under . . . as long as you are holding His hand.

Secondly - The Resurrection produces Joyful Confidence, Fervent Witness, and Consistent Worship.

If you went onto the ball field and you knew for certain that you were going to win, would you play tentatively?

No! You would play it out and enjoy the game.

You wouldn't be discouraged by early setbacks.

It would be fun because you knew victory was certain.

If you knew for certain that your current circumstances would not overcome you would it change your attitude?

If you knew for sure that your illness would not end your life would it change your viewpoint? I think it would.

The child of God does know these things!

We know how the story of life ends.

Jesus will be acknowledged as Lord of all.

Those who trust Him will live with Him in perfect fellowship and unending joy forever and ever.

There is NOTHING that can separate us from His love.

No circumstance, no discouragement, and no moment of failure.

We know how the story ends.

We can and should live joyfully. It's time to smile, laugh, rejoice and dance a little bit. Jesus lives and because He lives we will live also.

On the other hand, we know that those who will not trust Christ have no hope at all.

It doesn't matter how much they have, how powerful they are, or how much they say they are enjoying life.

They are dying a death worse than cancer.

They are dying spiritually and eternally.

Having seen the difference Jesus has made in our own life, having found the joy of living, how can we remain silent as others trudge to their sp. death?

To not share the gospel with those who are lost is to be like those who said nothing as Jews were exterminated in World War II.

It is like standing as a bystander while someone you know is being assaulted or raped.

It is like turning away from your own child when they need your help.

It is an unconscionable act.

If we care as we say we dowe must share the words of life and hope.

Like the men on the road to Emmaus we need to drop everything to go and tell the good news to others.

The resurrection should stimulate and motivate our worship.

He is worthy of our praise and our honor.

We now understand that He suffered on our behalf and rose to accomplish our redemption!

We should live with unceasing gratitude.

We should sing His praises, listen to His Words, and turn to Him with the cries of our heart.

He has proved that he is worthy.

Finally, the story of the Men on the road to Emmaus brings us to a point of decision.

In a sense, our worship this morning has been like the Savior walking along side of us on the road. We have heard the story.

As we end our time together you must decide: **will you part company with Jesus and let Him go on His way as you travel on to Hell, or will you invite Him into your life?**

This is a moment of decision.

Does His message burn in your heart today?

Has God's Spirit opened your eyes to the truth?

If so, invite Him to be your Savior.

Jesus said, ***“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to Him.”*** (Rev. 3:20).

If you invite Jesus to be your Savior and your Lord today He promises to be your Redeemer.

He promises to give you new life.

He promises to work God's will in your heart.

If you would like to invite Jesus into your life and become one of His followers rather than simply wave good-bye after our encounter together, I urge

you, in the quiet of this moment, to tell Him that this is your desire.

Ask Him to be your Savior, to cleanse your sin, and to lead your life.

And if you do you will discover that your journey today with the men on the road to Emmaus will become a Walk to Remember in your life too.

Invitation:

Would you be willing to say a Miracle Prayer with me this morning?

Just bow your heads and say this prayer with me.

“Dear Heavenly Father, God, I am in need of you this morning to change my life. I have needed Your Son Jesus Christ in My life. I am asking you to forgive me of all my past sins. I have lived my life without You and realize that someday there is going to be a recognizing day and I want my life to be ready for it.

On this Easter Sunday, I ask you to become my Lord and Savior through Jesus Christ. I believe in Your Son and I invite Him into My life. Amen!

Spiritual Instructions: