

**Who Walks With You?**  
**Luke 24:13-35**  
**Easter Sunday, April 5, 2015**

**Introduction – Slow Down and Reflect**

This is Resurrection Sunday – the climax of Holy Week! I don't know how it is for you, but the week before Easter Sunday is always a very busy one for me. Whether its music or creating an order of service or writing messages, I seem to always find myself very tired by the time I get to this day.

A lot of us live our lives in busyness, don't we? It's especially true if you're raising children. Get them to school, sports, music, church...it seems like there is never any breathing space. We don't often take time to reflect about life. Sometimes I think we keep ourselves really busy so that we don't have to face the quietness. So we don't have to answer the big questions in life.

Easter Sunday is busy. Yes. But in the next few moments, I want us to take a collective deep breath and consider some of the important questions of life. Many people have likened life to a journey. We walk the path of life. All around us there are other people on the same journey. Most of the time, we interact with them. But ultimately, we are left to our own thoughts and our own choices about life's purpose and meaning.

Luke 24 tells the unique story of two of Jesus' followers who were walking on the road to a little town about seven miles north of Jerusalem three days after he was crucified. Along the way, they encounter Jesus, but they do not know it at first. This morning, we can learn from them.

**Grieving...**

That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you

are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”

(vs. 13-24)

These men were in a state of shock and grief. It's hard for us as modern non-Jewish people to understand the devastation that they must have felt. For hundreds of years, they had been conquered, deported, returned to their country, only to find themselves under the harsh rule of foreign powers like the Romans. Their prophets had foretold of a deliverer who would come, set them free, and restore the old glory of the kingdom. They had hoped it was Jesus. But their hopes were crushed when he was humiliated, tortured, and killed on the cross. Rumors had spread that Jesus might have risen from the dead. But nobody had ever done that before. They were confused. How could they revive their hopes when they had been so violently ripped away when Jesus died? They were in shock. Confused. Grieving.

We all grieve on our journey through life. Your life may have been carefree as a child, (and we especially mourn children who have lost their innocence), but right around adolescence, things begin to change. Our eyes are opened and we begin to become aware of the brokenness of life. People can be mean. Life has its share of a lot of disappointments. And if we're honest, we begin to recognize things about ourselves that we don't like either. In our quiet moments, we wonder about life...what it all means. How can I fix my life that is so messed up? We grieve our brokenness.

Many of us busy our lives so that we won't have to face the grief. But Jesus had once said, "Blessed are those that mourn, for they shall be comforted." When we embrace our grief there is hope. Down through history, it has been those who recognized their brokenness and turned from it that were saved. Saul was a murderer but he became the greatest Apostle of the Church. Augustine was a playboy who would become one of the greatest pastors and theologians of history. John Newton hauled slaves as cargo in his ship. He wrote "Amazing Grace." Nicky Cruz was a New York gang-banger who became an effective evangelist, opening hundreds of youth centers helping people get free from drug addictions. Charles Colson was a dirty-tricks politician who specialized in destroying people. He dedicated his life to helping prisoners and their families find hope through the love of Christ.

There is nothing wrong with grieving. In fact, it's the first step towards healing.

### **Perceiving...**

And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

(vs. 25-27)

When you are grieving, you are looking for hope. That's part of the blessedness of grief. Your heart is open. And Jesus wasn't condescending to these two men. His remark on their foolishness and slowness of heart is simply an observation of human nature. I believe he made the comment with a fullness of affection for them. And then he went on to patiently explain how he would suffer and rise again from the dead – line by line from all the Scriptures.

A lot of people are like these two men. You've heard the story over and over again. Maybe you've been to church and Sunday School. If you're from another tradition, you might have even been confirmed in your church. But the grief and the questions still remain. To you, the gospel may be just a story. You've never really perceived and understood how it affects you personally. But there comes a time when the light begins to shine. Your heart begins to burn with passion for what the gospel promises. You're eager to hear. You're eager to respond.

That's how it was with these men who talked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus. They were beginning to understand with their hearts. They were beginning to perceive the Good News.

### **Believing...**

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them.

(vs. 28-30)

It is not enough to understand and perceive the gospel. You must act on it. You must believe. "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Clearly, that's what the men did. They were caught up in the conversation. They were beginning to get it. And now as Jesus started to part ways with them, they invited him into their house. They invited him into their lives.

And then a very strange thing happened. The hosts become the guests and the Guest becomes the Host. Don't miss that. It is Jesus who is blessing, breaking, and serving the bread. Once you invite Jesus into your life, he begins to order things. And that's OK. The one who invites Jesus into their life is tired of the grief and chaos and happy to have everything put right by the Savior.

### **Receiving...**

And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

(vs. 31-35)

There is a natural progression to the spiritual journey of these men. They were grieving and Jesus met them there. He explained God's plan to them and they began to understand. Their hearts "burned" with eagerness. They took action on their new understanding and invited Jesus into their home as their guest. And when Jesus served them, they received new sight, new understanding – new life! The Scripture is clear. They rose that same hour and hurried back to Jerusalem, all the way through the darkness of night to share their good news. Everything had changed! And they were eager to tell everyone about it.

### **Invitation**

There are many reasons to come to church on Easter Sunday. Many who are here come nearly every week. Others come from time to time and, if you are going to come to church, Easter Sunday is the one you should not miss. Some may only come once or twice a year. For whatever reason you came, we are very glad that you are here. I believe God has a plan for you coming to this church on this day.

Perhaps you've come today and you are grieving. There's an unsettledness in your soul. You might smile on the outside to keep meddling preachers like me at bay, but on the inside, you're dying. It may be a broken relationship or some sort of problem that is controlling you, filling your thoughts with fear and dread of the consequences that you know you cannot avoid. Maybe it's an unrelenting gnawing at your soul that something is missing, something is terribly wrong. You're broken. You're grieving.

You're in a good place. You see, just like the men on the road to Emmaus, Jesus is walking with you right now. You've heard the gospel. That Jesus died for your sins – your rebellion against God. He rose from the dead on the third day to heal your brokenness – to make you whole. That's the gospel, plain and simple. Are you perceiving it? Is the light beginning to shine?

It's not enough to understand the gospel. You have to believe it. Just like the men from Emmaus, you have to invite him into your life. Jesus was preparing to leave them and they invited him in. You may never have this opportunity again. This morning, Jesus is walking with

you and you need to invite him into your life. You need to believe. That's when you will receive a new life, forgiven and made whole.

**Closing Song: Christ is Risen**