

# On A Walk with Jesus!

**Luke 24:13-35 (Easter 3 - April 26, 2020)**

Now, on that same day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about all of these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing this, Jesus himself approached and began to walk along with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. He said to them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" Saddened, they stopped. One of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" "What things?" he asked them. They replied, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death. And they crucified him. But we were hoping that he was going to redeem Israel. Not only that, but besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Also some women of our group amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning. 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. They found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him." He said to them, "How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village where they were going, he acted as if he were going to travel farther. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, since it is almost evening, and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he reclined at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and began giving it to them. Suddenly their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. Then he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us along the road and while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?" They got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those who were with them assembled together. They were saying, "The Lord really has been raised! He has appeared to Simon." They themselves described what had happened along the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread.

Walking is good for you. It's good for your heart and your overall health as it gives you much needed exercise. However, walking has benefits not only for your physical health. It's good for your mental health too. You are out of the house doing something even if it's just a short walk or just walking your dog. On a walk is a good time to clear your head and just be refreshed. Yet I've discovered it's so much easier to go for a walk when you are going with someone else. When you walk with others, you can spend time in casual conversation, sharing details about your life, or just talking about what is on your mind. When my wife and I were first dating in college, there were many nights after we finished our studies we went for a walk. Yes, it was good exercise for us, but it was on those walks we could really talk and get to know each other better.

These two disciples were on a walk. It was Easter day. After all the events of the last few days with Jesus' crucifixion and death, all they could really do was go for a walk toward, presumably, their home in the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. Having not seen the risen Jesus there was nothing left for them in Jerusalem. Everything seemed to be all wrong. What they had thought Jesus would be in their minds he hadn't done. So they went for a walk.

Right now going for a walk is what we are being encouraged to do. It's good advice, but we are already on a different kind of walk every day, a walk of faith and trust in the risen Jesus. It's while on this walk that the risen Jesus walks with us as he did these disciples helping us to understand him better and the Scriptures which speak about him.

The conversation these two followers of Jesus were having on the road to Emmaus is not hard to imagine. There was a very real sense of urgency as they tried to solve the mystery, fill in the blank, and solve the puzzle of what had happened, what was going on and why. In frustration they failed to find the answer to their questions about Jesus. So it was in the middle of this deep discussion on the road, the risen Jesus walked alongside them. Just as traffic smoothly merges on the freeway, the Lord Jesus meets, walks beside, then joins them, but they are kept from recognizing him. You can almost picture Jesus walking and listening to what they were saying waiting for the perfect opportunity to jump in and ask them a question.

When the time was right, Jesus asked what seemed to be a very natural question, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" At this question, these disciples stopped dead in their tracks. Their faces were downcast and saddened. Their eyes had lost their twinkle and sparkle. Their heads hung down and shoulders were low. There is a sort of weariness that colors every action and word. So standing there looking at Jesus probably with a confusing look, the only one of these two disciples named by Luke - Cleopas, answers Jesus question with a question. "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened in these days?" In other words, "Where have you been for the last few days? Haven't you been paying attention to anything?" Normally when someone answers a question with a question, you tend to get a little annoyed. Yet Jesus, the ever patient teacher, asks again and a fine summary of Jesus' ministry and the last few days is given.

Did you catch what their "hopes" were for Jesus? "We were hoping that he was going to redeem Israel." They had watched. They had waited. Peter himself had gone to investigate. They had lingered in Jerusalem. But now it was time to go back to Emmaus. How they had hoped Jesus would redeem, buy back, rescue Israel from all their sins! They failed to connect the suffering and death of Jesus to what the Scriptures said about the coming Christ. As a result, their hopes of redemption seemed to be dashed to pieces.

As parents, when do we scold our children most severely? Isn't it when they should know better? These disciples should have known better! Jesus must have shaken his head. "How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter his glory? Wasn't the passion an essential part of God's plan to save them from sin?" These disciples were guilty of being slow to understand and slow of heart to believe that God's plan of redemption was all mapped out in the Scriptures. It was to these ignorant, slow of heart disciples, Jesus who was walking along with them now teaches them. He starts at the beginning explaining the Scriptures and how the redeeming work of the Christ is the heart of the Scriptures, the same Scriptures about which Jesus himself had said, **"You search the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them. They testify about me! (John 5:39)"**

On a walk with Jesus, what could he say to us? Could Jesus say the same about us? "How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!" Sometimes people walk around this world having heard the words about Jesus but in ignorance they apply the words of the Bible only as a moral guide and a "how to book" for life here. Some consider the Scriptures to be a "self-help book" on how I can redeem myself and get myself to heaven. Still others try to find in it promises for a life in this world that Jesus has not promised. Hopes are misguided, misdirected and in the end, all they would find in the Scriptures is disappointed hopes like these two disciples who didn't connect the dots. "How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken?" Could he say that about you?

The Scriptures point us to the Christ. They show us Jesus. They tell us why we need Jesus. We are sinners in need of redemption and salvation since we can't earn it ourselves. They show us God's plan for what Jesus was going to do and how it was accomplished from beginning to end. They tell us that redemption from sin and death is ours through the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Everything that is written in

the Scriptures directs our eyes toward Jesus and his redeeming work. As the Holy Spirit works through the Scriptures, foolish, slow to believe hearts are made wise for salvation. Paul wrote to his young friend Timothy, **“As for you, continue in the things you have learned and about which you have become convinced. You know from whom you learned them and that from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” (2 Timothy 3:14-15)** When Jesus walks and talks with us through the Scriptures, our hopes are never disappointments. Instead given renewed hope, Jesus sets our hearts on fire with the wondrous realization of sin’s redemption through his death and resurrection.

After an afternoon of walking, talking, and gently explaining, the end of the day was near and so was the journey of these two disciples. When they got to Emmaus, Jesus acted like he was going to keep going, but these disciples who were enamored with this man who had walked with them and talked with them and set their hearts on fire. So they urged him strongly to stay. “Stay with us, since it is almost evening, and the day is almost over.” They really wanted him to stay. And Jesus really wanted to stay too! When they gathered for a meal, their teacher for the afternoon became their host at the table.

Now was the right time. Jesus opened their eyes to see exactly who was explaining everything on the road. The same one who had kept his identity a secret now made it as plain as day who he really was. Some have speculated that when Jesus handed the disciples the bread they saw the nail marks in his hand and recognized him. However the Lord made himself known, he remained only a moment then he was made invisible, disappeared, vanished from their sight, but they had seen him.

It all made sense. They had been talking with Jesus. He was alive just as the women who had been to the tomb said. They now asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us along the road and while he was explaining the Scriptures?” God’s Word cut to the very heart of their lives, and their hopes were directed back to Jesus, their redeemer, who was not dead, but alive.

When these disciples realized they had seen the risen Lord, they returned at once to Jerusalem with no regard for their own safety. They didn’t make excuses about having just walked seven miles. This was news that had to be shared. Feet that had been weary just minutes ago now barely touched the ground as they raced back to Jerusalem with the news. “We have seen Jesus!”

There is great value in walking. It is good exercise for your body and relaxing for the mind. As the Risen Jesus walks and talks with us through the Scriptures, it is a walk that has more value than any physical exercise. Understanding the Scriptures that point us to Jesus and his redeeming work, our hearts are set on fire with faith and confidence in Jesus who is not dead, but has been raised to life. With hearts on fire, we have something fantastic to share. Who could you tell? Just as the risen Jesus walks with you, who could you go for walk with so that Jesus walks with them too? Amen