

Luke 24:13-35

If we want a clear picture of what a disciple of Jesus looks like, we need look no farther than our text in Luke 24. We see two men on the Emmaus road. They are confused, even bewildered by everything that is taking place. They are sad. And when Jesus comes to walk with them, they do not recognize Him. Yet, when they do realize that it is Jesus, they run with eagerness back to Jerusalem to share the good news that He is alive.

Now, you are a disciple of Jesus. So you are like these two disciples on the Emmaus road. But in what way? Do you resemble them on their journey to Emmaus, or on their run back to Jerusalem?

Well, since I am the only one here in this church building, besides my wife, I will speak for myself. And as I do, I am confident that I speak also for you, for we are all one and the same: sinful disciples loved by a merciful Lord.

At times I am the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. I get down and sad. I become frustrated. I feel bewildered by everything happening in the world and in my own life. I hesitate with moving forward because I'm unsure of what lies ahead, and especially now in these gray and latter days. So yes, like these two walking the road to Emmaus, I sometimes am a disciple of Jesus who acts as if He is dead. I know He is alive, but sometimes you couldn't tell by observing the way I walk through life.

So here's a question. Why didn't Jesus just go ahead and reveal Himself to these two when He began to walk with them? Why did He wait until they reached Emmaus?

Is it not because they needed to be taught the Scriptures as they walked along the road? One week later Jesus would say, "*Blessed are those who have not seen Me and yet have believed.*" Jesus is wanting these two to learn to believe in the normal way: by hearing the Word of God, not by seeing Him with their eyes.

That is what I need, and what you need. With our eyes we see the things in life that make us sad and confused, that cause us to become frustrated, and to worry about what lies ahead of us. To counter this, Jesus places His words into our ears. This is how we walk the Emmaus road by faith and not by sight: by being taught as we walk, faithfully hearing the Word of Christ, and in the strength of His Word, moving forward one step, one day at a time.

Don't ever think that you are not Jesus' disciple because you have bad days; days in which you worry and grow sad; days in which you can barely put one foot in front of the other. When these days come, think of these two disciples on the road to Emmaus. You are just like them. But look what Jesus does. He does not leave them to their bewilderment and sadness. He does not write them off and tell them they are no longer His disciples. He comes to them and walks with them. Oh yes, He does call them foolish and slow of heart to believe the Scriptures. But He says this not in anger but in love.

And who of us is not just as foolish and slow of heart to believe? Oh, we think we have life all figured out. These two disciples thought Jesus was the one who was uninformed, and they were going to teach Him what was going on. Sometimes we do the same thing, foolishly thinking that we are going to inform and control God; have Him see life as it really is.

But then God sends a virus to remind us that we do not have life all figured out, and to teach us that we dare not walk the Emmaus road by sight, but only by faith in His assuring words.

And His words are assuring. They warmed the hearts of these two disciples. “*Did not our hearts burn within us,*” they said to each other, “*while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?*” This is what life is all about. “*Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*” Even before these two disciples recognized that it was the risen Lord Jesus, their hearts were alive with faith, joy, and hope, for this is what the words of Jesus do. “*Stay with us,*” they urged Jesus when they reached Emmaus, for disciples of Jesus desire Him, desire to be with Him, and to hear Him.

And so isn't it wonderful how Jesus is walking with us, opening to us the Scriptures, as we walk this perplexing and uncertain road? We cannot go to Him, just as these two disciples could not, and so He comes to us. Through the means of technology at this time. Through this video service. Or through the reading of His words, for some of you are even now reading this sermon.

So when do we leave behind us the road to Emmaus, and begin the joyful and eager run back to Jerusalem? Well, if you're like me, we're doing both. We're back and forth. One day we joyfully tell the good news of the risen Lord; the next day we're overcome with sorrow and we're back on the road to Emmaus acting as if our Lord was dead.

What this means is that we never outgrow our need to hear the Scriptures. We never get to a point in life where we can tell Jesus, “See Ya.” We dare never think we can walk by sight because we finally have life all figured out.

You and I are and remain sinful disciples. But we have a Lord who is merciful. He made you His disciple in your baptism. And His words of assurance to you there stand forever. You belong to Him always. He will never leave you nor forsake you. And His forgiveness, won for you on the cross, is always yours. No conditions attached. Foolish or not, you are forgiven. Slow of heart to believe or not, your sins are forgiven. His resurrection from the dead seals this for you. So even if you sometimes act as if He was dead...He's not. He lives to walk with you on your Emmaus road. Amen.