


## ***“Emmaus”***

**Sunday, April 30, 2017**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter**

**#2 in series of 3: *“Where Doubt Leads”***

 **Luke 24:13-35 (NRSV)**

### **The Walk to Emmaus**

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened.

While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?”

They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?”

He asked them, “What things?”

They replied, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over 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 took place.

Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed 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 they did not see him.”

Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets

have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?”

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.

But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over.”

So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.

They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?”

That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.

They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!”

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

This is the Word of God for the people of God.

*Thanks, be to God.*

**[2<sup>ND</sup> Service: Affirmation of Faith]**

**[MESSAGE]**

This is an amazing story that we love to hear during the Easter Season.

For these two disciples, doubt is leading them away from Jesus and his promises.

Their world has been turned upside down by the events of the past couple days.

Earlier this morning, some women from their group claimed that Jesus was no longer in the tomb.

They had their doubts about that story.

So, we find them on the road home, walking away from their pain and their doubt; walking away from Jesus.

Fortunately, Jesus goes after them to calm their doubt and bring them back.

**Let us pray...**Lord, this morning, some of us come here with doubts and fears that threaten to overwhelm us. Help us find answer to our questions and certainty for our doubts as we listen to your word. In Jesus' name, we pray. **Amen.**

I wonder if we would be much different from the two guys in this story.

Think about it:

Hasn't our world been turned upside down by terrorism, war, job loss, and disease?

Don't we wonder sometimes what we are supposed to be doing to stay on the right road?

Don't we get confused and disappointed, wondering where God is during our times of trial?

Maybe when we face pain and loss we *too* walk away from God instead of walking beside Him.

So, here are these guys, walking along and talking about their doubts, their fears and their disappointments; looking to each other for sympathy and answers they simply do not have.

Then, Jesus joins the pair and they, like us, are looking straight at him and they/we don't recognize Him.

Imagine that - Jesus presents Himself to the world and we don't recognize Him!

In the story, it may be that God intends for the two disciples not to know who Jesus is so they will be more open to discussing their concerns.

For us, God keeps us "blind" to Himself until we accept the grace and knowledge He offers to give us the "sight" we need to be able to see Him more clearly.

Jesus asked the travelers what they are discussing.

He acts as if he is not aware of the crucifixion and gets the men to talk to him; they find they are eager to share the story of Christ.

This tells us that those who have the knowledge of Jesus Christ are obliged to share their

knowledge; sharing the story of Jesus is part of our Christian witness.

The great thing is that we not only help others to find Jesus along the road, we learn more about Him ourselves as we tell His story.

Jesus teaches them the truth about Himself.

He goes through the Old Testament and cites the prophecies pointing to the Messiah.

He shows how those prophecies are fulfilled.

As they listen, the two begin to understand and their doubts fade.

We should see that we can gain this same knowledge if we go to God's Word.

That's why it's so important for us to participate in Sunday worship, to attend Sunday school, and to study the Bible alone and in groups.

This is how we satisfy our doubts and find answers to our questions – the truth is revealed to us in Scripture and there is no other way for us to discover it.

When they arrive at their destination, Jesus shares a meal with them and is revealed in the breaking of the bread.

These two disciples suddenly have an “Aha” moment as Jesus blesses the bread and gives it to them.

They finally realize that He truly is risen from the dead and that He is the Messiah.

They now see how they had misunderstood.

As soon as they recognized Him, He vanished from their sight.

Because of their faith they no longer needed to see Him to believe.

Christ makes Himself known to the souls of His people by His Holy Spirit.

We see that we must get to know Christ through the Scriptures because we have not seen Him as these disciples did.

Scripture provides us a road map guiding us away from sin toward salvation in Jesus.

We see that we know Jesus through Holy Communion. We can't know Jesus based on our own expectations.

We come to know Jesus through study, fellowship, and sacrament.

This story is about how we encounter the living Christ.



We are kept from recognizing Christ until our eyes are opened by the grace of God as we realize the meaning of Scripture.

We must be alert to Christ if we are to recognize Him.

Christian fellowship, group Bible study, and church attendance are all important for keeping our hearts open to Christ's message of hope and love.

Further, it is every Christian's obligation to pass this message along to others so that they might also find Christ revealed to them along their road.

The disciples immediately went back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples what they had seen.

They were filled with faith now and they knew they had to share it.

This is what we are all called to do – to share our faith in Jesus Christ with the world.

Last week we saw how doubt leads us to ask questions and our questions lead us to find answers.

Today, we see that doubt can also lead us away from God, wandering in wilderness.

This doubt robs us of our relationship with Jesus  
and causes us to lose sight of everything we  
knew about him.

This doubt can be crippling.

Jesus Christ is the only one who can bring certainty to  
our doubt.

Jesus will not force His way into our heart.

God will allow us to push Him away.

He will go on down the road without us unless we  
invite Him to walk with us.

And, as we walk, we must share His love and  
companionship with others just as the two  
disciples rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the  
other disciples that they had seen the Risen  
Lord.

We, too, must share the love of Christ and invite  
others to join us on the road.

### **Invitation:**

This morning I invite you to walk down the road with  
Jesus.

If you feel like you are walking down the road  
alone, without Jesus at your side, today is the  
day to ask Him to join you.

This is a safe place - you are here with friends.

There is no better time to make that personal  
decision to ask Jesus to walk beside you.

Each of us faces a crisis of belief in God.

We all fall into the trap of doubt from time to time.

God gave us the Bible as a road map to guide us to  
Him – to keep us on the road less traveled.

The Risen Lord is waiting for your invitation.

All you have to do is ask Him to walk with you.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**