

Luke 24:13-35 The Friend Who Walks With Us

Luke 24:13-35 On the Road to Emmaus

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Introduction

- When you are asked the question, "What is life?" How do you respond? I think I would respond saying, "Life is a journey." In this journey we come across many beautiful things. We rejoice greatly in new discoveries. But there are also times when we lose our ways or feel anxious and unsettled.
- Sometimes we feel excited not knowing what awaits us next. And the joy we feel when we have finally reached our destinations is especially great. Of course, life in reality is not always so pleasant. There are times when we meet disappointment after disappointment, and we become disillusioned. In such times, nothing consoles us better than close friends who are near to us.
- Today's scriptures speak on how the resurrected Christ walks with us in this journey of life as our best friend. According to scriptures, God is our friend in astounding ways. Christ gives us the maps and guidebooks for navigating this journey, provides us with all the equipment we may need along the way, and guides our hearts with courage and resolution. Let us then read on how two of His disciples walked with the resurrected Christ.

Luke 24:13-35

Let's look at three points from today's scriptures. First, let's focus on how Jesus is with us in our life's journey. Second, let's focus on how Christ cleanses us anew. And third, let's take a look at how our lives are changed through the resurrection of Christ. Christ accompanies us through this journey of life; He is our best friend, and our lives are changed through him.

1. Christ who accompanies us through life

- According to scriptures, two people, downcast, were heading to Emmaus from Jerusalem. There were two reasons for this. First, they were waiting on Christ, but because He was crucified, their hopes had been betrayed. They had lost their hope in life.

- The second reason is that the community of Christ's disciples had been dispersed. They had lost their place of belonging. Having lost both their hope and place of belonging, they aimlessly started off to Emmaus from Jerusalem.
- The two that are heading to Emmaus are very similar to Adam and Eve, as they appear in Genesis chapter 3. Adam and Eve were free to walk about the Garden of Eden, enjoying the hopes of life. The garden was God's community and the two had a hopeful outlook on life and the objective of life.
- However they were expelled from the Garden of Eden, as they became egoistic and turned their backs on God. They committed the sin of deeming God unnecessary. They grew apart from God and ended up losing their hope and vitality for life. The image of the two disciples journeying to Emmaus conjures up the image of Adam and Eve, cast out of the Garden of Eden and wandering about aimlessly.
- And in this image of the two disciples and the image of Adam and Eve, we could see our present-day selves. If we don't have Christ, we end up losing sight of God, who is the very hope we have for this life. We depart from His community in which we help and support one another. And what is the result of that?
- In verse 16, it says that they were kept from recognizing him. The most fascinating point is that Christ resurrected appeared before their very eyes, yet they still couldn't recognize him. They talked about the recent crucifixion, and about the strange happenings reported by the women. However, they still don't realize that the person who is walking with them and talking to them is Christ Himself. Is this even possible?
- A while ago, I saw something very interesting on TV. One person asks a question to another person passing by in the streets. While the person is asking for directions, an object big enough to obstruct their view passes through the gap between them. Of course both their conversation and views are obstructed momentarily. At the same time, at that very moment, the person who was asking for directions is replaced by a completely different person. Interestingly, the person who was asked for directions does not realize that the person who had been asking for directions, changed into a completely different person. They continue talking as if nothing happened. They tried this experiment on many different people. They even changed genders, or they would have a Japanese person all of a sudden change into a black person, but they had no idea!
- If that's the case, if the two disciples were convinced that Christ was dead, it may not be such a weird thing that they didn't recognize Him, even after He appeared before their very eyes. It's entirely possible. However, the more important thing is, this is also reflective of our lives. The important things are not visible to us. Life is incomprehensible and unrecognizable at times.
- That they were "kept from recognizing Him" means that they were unable to recognize the truth. They're insensitive to important things that they would normally recognize immediately. They are not looking at what they ought to be looking at. They're convinced that God doesn't exist and that Jesus did not resurrect from the dead. They've given up on life, deeming it absurd, and have resorted to isolation. They ignore the fact that there needs to be love and trust in any human relationship. Brothers and sisters, doesn't it become manifest here, the very reason and cause for life's unhappiness? It's when you don't even realize that Christ is with you and you stop believing.
- We are neglecting the things that we really ought to value. Despite having the resurrected Christ right by our sides, we rely on the powers of world, or prioritize other things the world deems of value, and we end up losing our ways. Even though the resurrected Christ walks with us at all times like a good friend.

2. A friend that walks together

- However, this little episode of the three's journey also conveys that there is hope to our lives. The reason is, Christ joined in on the journey of the two dejected men like a friend, and He guided them to the rebirth of life. In the same way, Jesus is willing to be each and every one of our best friend.
- How difficult must the two's journey have been? Here we see two very emblematic points.
 - ① They were departing from the capital city of Jerusalem to a much smaller village of Emmaus.
 - ② Night was approaching, both of which symbolize emptiness, failure, disappointment, and sadness.
- Nevertheless, Christ walked with them on their journey. Verse 15 emphasizes how Christ intentionally joined in on their journey. "Jesus Himself," refers to none other than the resurrected Christ Himself. It illustrates how Jesus, whom we thought was dead, is actually alive and gladly partook in their journey.
- Despite that in verse 25, Jesus rebukes them for being foolish and slow to believe, He nevertheless walked with them. His love for them would never change, and He would never forsake them. He who bore the cross for our sake, understands every single one of our pains and distresses. We are therefore able to be saved by the power of resurrection and life.
- Brothers and sisters, isn't a best friend someone who walks with you, not only during the good days but also during the dark and gloomy days? A true friend is someone who will be with you during your times of disappointment and sadness. In truth, Jesus walked with the two disciples during the most tumultuous times in their lives. And in the same way, Christ is with you during yours.
- In Scriptures, there are two people who are referred to as friends of God. Do you know who these are? It's Abraham and Moses. Both were full of flaws. In addition, this is how Scriptures describe Moses: Exodus 33:11 The Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.
- As it is made clear in this verse, the reason Moses was God's friend is that he spoke with God frequently. God also spoke His heart to Moses. Moses spoke frankly to God about his thoughts and desires, as well as his plans. Even when he was feeling frustrated, he communicated his feelings honestly to God.
- In the same way, the friendship between Christ and the two disciples that were heading to Emmaus is most manifest when they are conversing. When we say friendship with God, it may sound too supernatural or other-worldly. However, in reality, Jesus taught scriptures to His disciples by casually conversing with them.
- The two disciples then told Jesus about the things they recently experienced. The events that just took place in Jerusalem, what they thought about Jesus, and how they were dependent on Him. They also told Him about the surprising news that the women shared with them but that they no longer feel hopeful about anything anymore.
- I'm sure we all communicate with various people in various ways. But perhaps, we're not paying due attention to the most important communication. Is your communication with Christ, our best friend who has given us this wonderful friendship, sufficient? Are you listening to His word and learning from it? Are you telling Him about all of your heart's desires, thoughts, plans, despairs, and frustrations? Instead of just murmuring them inside your heart, are you actually spelling them out to God directly in prayer?

- If you do so, as it says in verse 32, we'll be able to experience our hearts burning within. We will be able to experience the friendship of Christ in the midst of suffering and anxiety. Your heart will be gripped with the love and freedom that Christ gave to us on the cross. It will rid you of all the troubles and unsettling thoughts in your heart. You will be able to rid yourself of all doubts you had about God and find the path to your new life.

3. Life's Transformation

- In this way, the two disciples, unbeknownst to them, shared a short journey with Jesus whereby a friendship with Him budded. And when they finally realized that this is the resurrected Christ Himself, their journey's destination changed. What was once a downcast journey down to Emmaus became a victorious return back to Jerusalem.
- What had happened? What kind of changes does friendship with the resurrected Christ impose upon us? Firstly, it completely transforms the way we view Christ. The two disciples were convinced that Christ had died, and that his ministry had failed, making him nothing more than another prophet. However, now their belief systems were completely changed: they believed that Christ rose from the dead and is walking among them as their King and that Jesus is the true Messiah.
- Secondly, their views on the past completely changed. Christ's death on the cross was most definitely a death. However, now they see and accept His death as God's astounding work of salvation. His death on the cross, shone by the light of the resurrection, became a sign of His shining love and salvation.
- Jesus' resurrection reshapes even your past. What is surprising is that even your past experiences (although the experiences themselves don't change), through the resurrection of Christ, take on a new meaning and can be reinterpreted. Of course, they may still be painful recollections. Even so, they become experiences that are filled with holy inspiration. They become experiences that include God's love and special teachings, and from there they are connected to other newer experiences in the future.
- Thirdly, the friendship of the resurrected Christ gives us a new calling in life. Just like how the two disciples returned to Jerusalem to spread the word about Christ, we all become witnesses to the resurrected Christ. So please go out and share with each other how your lives have been changed by your encounter with Jesus and how you were saved. Let's share how we've recently been personally encouraged and disciplined through our friendship with Jesus, through our communication with him (Scripture reading and prayer).
- So how does this take place? I've already mentioned it before, but it's through communication with Christ (taking heed to what He is saying to you through Scriptures and telling Him the things you have to say through prayer). Also, as it is written in verse 30, it's through worship and communion (breaking of bread). This is because the resurrected Christ gave Himself to us through bread and wine.
- And at this time, we must reexamine our expectations, our ideals and life's agendas. The two disciples were hoping that Jesus would become the King of Israel who would save them through military might. That was their expectation toward Christ and it was also their own agenda.
- Yet Jesus tells them in their conversation that their expectations and agenda were wrong. Let's look at verses 25-26.
- **25** He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?"
- We must all reflect back on whether we're not holding the wrong expectations or holding out selfish ideals or planning selfish agendas, regardless of whether we call upon the name of the Lord or not. We might be feeling sad or frustrated because the things we are hoping for are not coming true. If you are harboring anger towards God, or falling into self-loathing, you might want to look back on your own expectations, ideals or agendas and rethink them.

- This is often accompanied by pain, but this process is also what Scriptures refer to as repentance. However, Jesus is our best friend, and He will never forsake us. He will always love us; He will always support us. He will always be with us.

As it is written in John 15:13, there is no greater love than for one to lose his life for his friend. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

- If you become a friend of Christ and nurture that friendship, you will become a renewed person and walk within a new-found joy. Even if you change your thoughts, expectations, ideals and agendas, there is a plan and a calling that are far superior. Let us encounter Jesus and begin walking a worthy life full of meaning.

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