

ST. JOHN'S WEST BEND

Sermon – April 26, 2020 (St. John's West Bend – YouTube Service)

Pastor Jeff Hesse



Text: *Luke 24:13-35 & 1 Peter 1:17-25 (ESV)*

Series: Death Defeated – Easter (3rd Sunday)

Theme: *Walking & Talking with Jesus*

Children's Message

Hello boys and girls – it's time for the Children's Message! It is good to be with you again to worship Jesus... even though I am on TV (or in a computer) right now... and you are at your home! I miss seeing all you kids... I can't wait until we can be together again!

Hey kids, do you ever go on walks? Yes... me too! I especially like to go for walks with Mrs. Hesse – especially on the beach! ☺ Let me ask you a question, when you go for a walk... what do you bring with you?

Maybe you walk with a walking stick. This is a walking stick that my father-in-law made... just for me. It's pretty cool and special to me. My father-in-law made it very colorful. Each one of the colors of the walking stick has meaning to it. You can use a walking stick to help you keep your balance to not fall down.

Maybe you walk with shoes on your feet. It helps to know where you are walking in order to pick out the right kind of shoes... doesn't it. For instance...

- If you are walking on the beach – **flip-flops**.
- If you are walking in the snow, or by a swamp, you probably want to wear **rubber boots**.
- If you are walking up a high hill or out at Faith Haven, you may want to bring **hiking boots**.

- And if you are going for a long walk on a sidewalk or at a park or the playground, you probably wear **tennis shoes**.



I just read from the Bible (Luke 24) about two guys going for a walk. One of the guys was named Cleopas. These 2 guys were walking *from Jerusalem to a little town called Emmaus*. Jerusalem was where Jesus died on the cross to pay for all our sins... and where Jesus rose from the grave to show us that He is the way to eternal life!

So... on that first Easter Sunday when Jesus came alive again, these two guys were walking on a road to this little town... Emmaus... and it was all downhill. Imagine that! They were walking on a dirt road from the Jerusalem that was high up, downhill all the way... about the distance from here at church to Kewaskum. It was late in the day... starting to get dark outside. And these two guys... maybe had walking sticks. And the funny thing is... they probably were wearing shoes... kind of like flip-flops as they were hiking down the hill. Pretty silly huh! Well, that's what they had for shoes back then!

God tells us in the Bible that they were talking with each other about what had just happened in Jerusalem. They were talking about Jesus! **But do you know what? Cleopas and the other guy were sad. They were sad because they didn't know yet that Jesus was alive!** But... then something amazing happened! Jesus showed up on the road... the Road to Emmaus... **and Jesus started walking and talking with them.** Cleopas and the other guy were ***Walking & Talking with Jesus!*** Because Jesus was alive and came to them!

And do you know what Jesus did? Jesus told these 2 guys all about what the Bible had to say... about Him. **Jesus had a Bible Study right there on the road!** As Cleopas and the other guy were ***Walking & Talking with Jesus*** they started to feel less sad... they started to get happy and excited! Jesus

helped them understand that God loved them and He was alive so they wouldn't have to be sad anymore! In fact, after Jesus ate bread with these two guys and their friends, they were so excited they ran back to Jerusalem – 7 miles – all UPHILL – to tell Jesus's disciples that Jesus was alive!

Boys and girls... Jesus is alive! And Jesus still comes to walk & talk with you! Having a walking stick, or the right kind of shoes is not as important as WHO it is that is walking with you! You are ***Walking & Talking with Jesus*** every day... as you pray, as God speaks to you from the Bible, in songs or through other people. Jesus walks along with you wherever you go!

Let's pray: Thank you Jesus for coming to walk with us on our road. We know that you are alive and that you love us. We love you Jesus... and we love Walking & Talking with you! Amen!

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Grace, mercy, and peace be unto each of you in the name of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit... Three-in-One. Amen!

I have often reflected on what happened that first Easter Sunday afternoon. Lots going on there. Jesus opening up the Scriptures revealing Himself through God's OT prophecies... while on a 7 mile walk on a country road. How awesome was that?!



Jesus breaks bread with Cleopas and the other disciples and then shows His body is miraculously glorified beyond this earthy dimension... and He disappears right before their eyes.

When you hear the Holy Spirit tell us what happened on the Road to Emmaus, it takes multiple readings of the text to really settle in. There is a wide range of emotions and real-life situations that changes for Cleopas, his friend and the disciples.

Luke 24 tells us:

- In verse 17 that when Jesus walks up to them, the two guys walking the road are sad.
- By the next verse, verse 18, they are perplexed.
- In verses 19-20 they are informative.
- In verse 21 they are hopeful.
- In verse 22 they are amazed.
- In verse 29 they are hospitable.
- In verse 30 they are friendly.
- In verse 31-32 they are spiritually aware.
- In verse 33 they are excited and motivated.
- In verse 34 they are joyful.
- And in verse 35 they missional.

And it all started with sadness. Sadness that was met by ***Walking & Talking with Jesus.***

For me... even as a Pastor, I often will read this text when I am down... sad... maybe even a little depressed... and God the Holy Spirit points me back to the fact... the truth that **Jesus still comes and meets me where I am at and opens up the Scriptures to me.** And before you know it, I am ***Walking & Talking with Jesus.*** Just like Cleopas and his friend, I too go on that road... and I change.



I am reminded in this account on that first Easter Sunday of who Jesus really is. That Jesus is God. That Jesus created all things by His Word, His authority and His actions that reveal who He is.

I am reminded that Jesus stepped into His creation to save me... that God became a human and dwelt among us and revealed the Father to us... that Jesus reveals His grace and His truth. That Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life!



Where are you at? What road... or roads have you been walking these days?

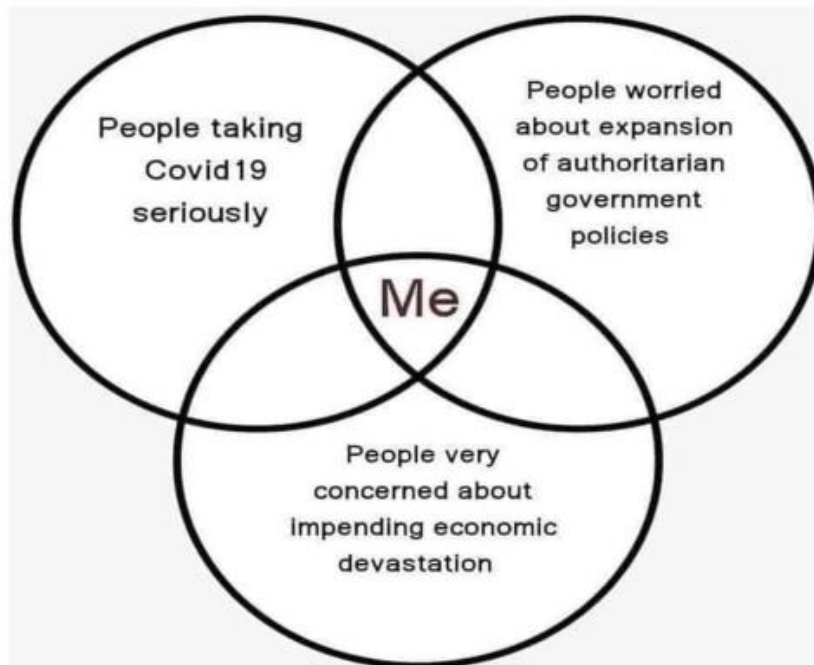
What does your journey on the Road to Emmaus look like to you these days?

Jesus is still alive... still risen. Jesus is in heaven, reigning as King of His creation.

When have you heard from Him, talked with Him?

Instead of worrying about the walking stick or the shoes... or the stresses and emotions of life. **Have you focused on the WHO? Have you focused on Jesus... the Lord Almighty... the One who comes and walks with you... full of His grace and His truth?**

Christ is the only one who can truly turn your sadness into joy... a joy that is so amazing and wonderful that you can't stop sharing Him with the world. Even our broken world... a world that we live in... and experience... and participate in.

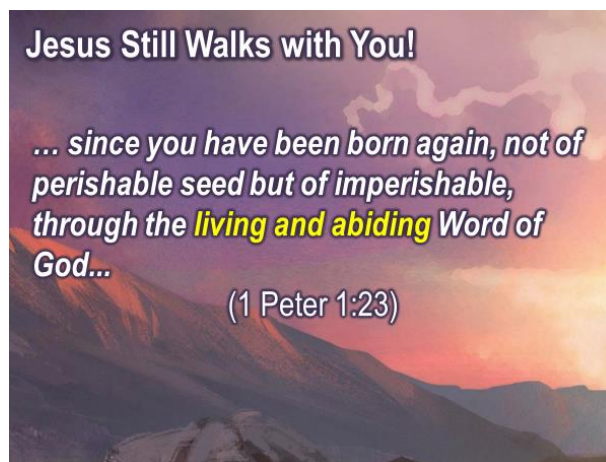


Our own Rachel Morton posted this on her Facebook page this past week. I think this "chart" pretty well summarizes the emotions I have felt on my *Road to Emmaus* over the last month or so. **READ THE CHART** From one day to the next, even one hour to the next I can reflect and find myself...

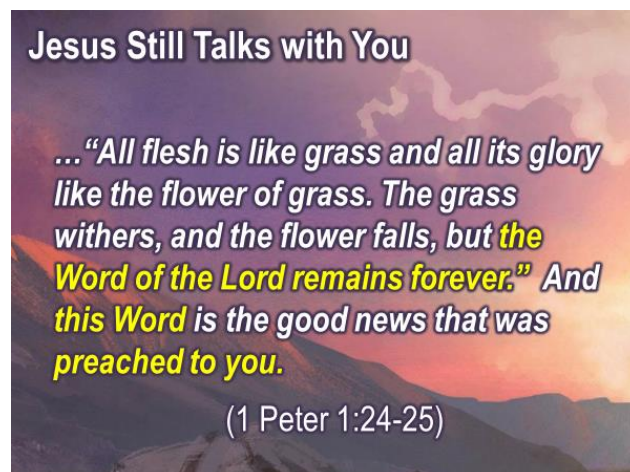
- on a road going UPHILL in excitement and joy, hopeful, informative, hospitable, friendly, spiritually aware, excited and motivated, joyful and missional...
- or on a road going DOWNHILL sad... perplexed... and generally amazed at the situation we all (actually everyone in the world at the same time) find ourselves in.

But, the chart above is missing some pretty big things.

There is more going on in life today (even though it doesn't seem like it) than COVID-19 worries and devastation. Don't get me wrong... there are a lot of problems, cracks in our society, disappointments, frustrations and hurts that the devil is using to bring despair, trying to separate us from a relationship with God. We can see this in the chart... our Roads can get pretty lonely when we focus on "ME" at the center. Where is Jesus? Jesus is Walking & Talking with You – He is there with you!



For you baptized into God's Kingdom of love... His Christians... you trust that God comes to you... speaks to you... and turns your sadness into joy as you remember God's presence and His promises. You are **Walking & Talking with Jesus through the Living and Abiding Word of God!**



Maybe you have reflected on **your Road to Emmaus** and the emotions and changes that have come to you. Maybe you've realized that your life was NUTS before the virus... and God has sent you a message of new creation, that indeed you have been born again through His very presence, even in the midst of this time of uncertainty, frustration and suffering:

- Maybe you moms and dads are spending really important, special, memorable time with your kids again. Perhaps you are eating meals together... praying together.
- Maybe you parents are realizing the importance of your children's teachers and you wonder how they can do this for your child every day, much less two dozen kids in a class.
- Maybe you have realized that working endless hours, burning yourself out trying to accumulate wealth is not the end-all, be-all to your life, that there is more to life than money.
- Maybe you have been touched by how God has provided for you in your time of need through your church, your family, your friends, your government, and those in the community who carry a burden of service.
- Maybe you realize now, more than ever, how fragile and precious the human body is... and you have been able to take the time to exercise.
- Or how fragile your emotions can be, how fragile and precious relationships are when we have taken them for granted far too many times.
- Perhaps God has driven you to your knees in dependency and you have grown in your prayer life... that in all of this you have grown to seek a better relationship with God, trusting that He wants you to bring your cares and concerns to Him in a deeper, more dependent relationship.
- Maybe you have come to realize that all of life is a gift... every breath is a gift from God... and that life and God's promise of eternal life in Jesus is really, truly amazing... more precious than anything!



This is the lesson of the resurrection as you travel the Emmaus Road. This is the Bible Study that Jesus is giving to you as He meets you where you are at on your road. These are the lessons of the Bible for you that you too can share with joy and excitement to the people God has placed in your life... people you love.

It's not about the walking sticks, the shoes, the emotions, the relationships... or even the road itself. **What makes it all mean something... what makes it all worthwhile and important is Jesus... the Road to Emmaus is all about the resurrected Jesus!** It always has been, and it always will be about a relationship with the Living Christ... experiencing the peace and joy of ***Walking & Talking with Jesus!***

May God bless you in His grace and truth with the resurrection reality that **Christ is Risen... He is Risen indeed! Alleluia! Amen.**