

Luke 24:13-35

Easter 3, Supplement Series A, April 30, 2017

Theme: Walk with Jesus after Easter

- I. Without recognizing him, we are sad
- II. Warm hearts when we hear the gospel
- III. What we know, we tell

INJ The NFL advertises “Play 60” to encourage children and adults to get moving and be active. It seems that we do a lot of sitting, and having everything available on our phones doesn’t help our mobility. Especially as the weather gets nicer we want to get moving – taking walks and exercising and being active. How many steps do you get on your Fitbit each day?

Movement is an integral part of our lives, whether or not we step into an exercise routine. We talk about moving on or moving up or moving out. Can you gauge if you are speeding up or slowing down? Look at all the places you go in your car or on your bike! Where are you heading this week? Are there ball games for the children or doctor visits or field trips or travel for work? Write it all down in a calendar so you don’t forget where you should move next!

The thought for today is to consider how your life’s movements correlate with Jesus and his word. Are you moving with Jesus or apart from him? Are God’s promises present in your activity or absent from it? When you go from place to place, do you have Jesus’ comfort and peace with you, or have you left them out? The Emmaus disciples give us occasion to consider that we walk with Jesus after Easter.

The two disciples were on their way home from Jerusalem on Easter Sunday evening. They had met with Jesus’ disciples and the various people who followed him. Their whole lives had been turned upside down! Jesus had taught with authority, and they had been listening and learning for some time. Jesus healed the sick. He had raised Lazarus from the dead. So many people had put their hope in him! Surely he was a prophet of God.

On Friday, everything had changed in a moment. Jesus was arrested. The charges against him were bogus, but they prevailed in court. Before the day was done Jesus was hanging on a cross, and he was dead. They buried him quickly before the Sabbath began. Then they observed the Festival of the Firstfruits. Their celebration wasn’t very joy-filled.

Sunday morning they tried to figure out what to do next. The news they heard was disturbing. The women didn’t find Jesus’ body at the tomb. There was talk of angels appearing. Some people said crazy things about Jesus being alive. How could he meet them in Galilee? No one knew what

was going on.

It is Sunday evening as we are walking home with those two disciples, and they are talking about what all this means. A strange man joined their conversation. He didn’t know what they were talking about. The translation we read said, “Saddened, they stopped.” Not even a visitor should be this clueless! Their faces looked down at the ground. They were heartbroken about Jesus. Their hopes and dreams were shattered.

Notice their movements. They had gone back and forth and away and home without Jesus. Without recognizing what was said about him. Without understanding God’s promises. Without seeing how what God had done was truly astounding. They were sad – agitated, forlorn, lost.

Consider your life’s movements. How often are you busy and active and running around with fears and worries and high emotions while your energy drains away? Where is Jesus? When we don’t recognize him, we end up sad, too. Frazzled and clueless for what to do next. Politics and health and relationships and finances – how can God let this happen? Why doesn’t he help me? I had hoped that going to church would make me feel better. I thought life would be better by now. How can anyone survive what I am going through? Saddened, we stop. Our faces become downcast. What is going on? We have been walking along without recognizing Jesus. Even after Easter we find ourselves feeling alone and lost.

Often it is our default movement to walk without recognizing Jesus. The Emmaus disciples talked as if they had no hope. When you feel that way, I want you to notice what is missing. Now, look at how things change when we walk with Jesus hearing the gospel! The Lord warms our hearts.

Jesus hid himself from being recognized as he walked with the Emmaus disciples. What their eyes didn’t see, their ears heard. Jesus began to teach them. Beginning with Moses and all the prophets he showed them how God’s promised Messiah was not a political figure or a social equalizer. He was the Savior from sin. God said he would suffer and die and take the curse of God from us. The prophets foretold that he would be despised and rejected and hated by many. No public accolades would accumulate, and no powerful alliance would gather. It was the Lord’s will to make him the sacrifice that atoned for sin. Nothing happened here that was unexpected. It was all written down in the Scriptures. Everything that was written is there to teach us, to show us, to point to Jesus the Savior from sin.

God’s Words are the Spirit’s tool to warm our hearts. No matter what your trouble or worry, Jesus is your answer. Listen to his words! He says that he is your salvation, that he forgives your sin, that he is with you always, that you will live with him forever in heaven. He assures you that

even though there is trouble and hardship, he will never leave you nor forsake you. When your life is a confusing mess, his words are your sure help and strength and salvation. Walk with Jesus after Easter.

Our hearts are warmed when God's undeserved love is our focus. Go back to your baptism. You were washed and cleansed of all your sin. God made you his dear child and gave you saving faith. Now, every day, you get to live your baptism by drowning your sinful self with repentance. Every day you get to live with the resurrected Christ in a new life that glorifies his name. When it is hard to move through life's difficulties, remember God's promise and proclaim: "I am baptized into Christ!"

With all the crazy movements of our lives, it is easy to lose track of the peace and comfort Jesus gives. The focus and redirection we need happens when we come to God's Words – when we worship with fellow believers at church, but also when we worship with our family at home. When we read and ponder God's Word privately. There the Holy Spirit is active to keep you in the faith, to calm your fears, and to warm your heart.

When the Emmaus disciples got to the end of their walk home, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. But they encouraged him to stay with them longer. This time, when they stopped with Jesus, they were no longer sad, but they were fed and nourished and they were happy to spend their time with him. Thinking back on their walking with Jesus, they said, "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?"

Jesus makes our hearts warm as we hear his gospel message. He assures us that our sins are forgiven. He shows us how he keeps his promises. He calms us down and gives us perspective. No, things won't always go the way we would like them, but the Lord works through his gospel so we trust him more. Walk with Jesus after Easter, gladly hearing and learning his words. Don't our hearts burn within us?

It isn't an emotional reaction, these warm hearts, but the solid confidence that our God does what he says. He raised Jesus from the dead, and now all our movements are affected by that truth. It means we have a living Savior. It means our sins are forgiven. It means we will live with him forever. The Emmaus disciples could not just sit around the table and talk between themselves about how wonderful it was that they saw Jesus. They had to get up and go back to the others and tell them what had happened. After Easter, we walk with Jesus who has given us focused and determined actions. Energized by that we know, we tell it!

Follow the movements of these disciples. Trudging home after a long weekend, they were sad and slow. Walking and talking with Jesus, I

can imagine their pace being steady and strong. Now, on the way back into town, are they running? It was a seven mile trip, and it was evening, so probably not running the whole time. But they couldn't wait to tell what they knew. Can you picture their movement as determined? Joyful? Quick?

What if you were walking with them that evening? Would you be leading the way, or trailing behind? Complaining that it was too far away and you were too tired and it was too dark? Or, would you be practicing how to say the words to express the truth that Jesus is risen from the dead?

Consider how you walk with Jesus after Easter. On this day, the truth is no less amazing that your Jesus lives. He is not dead and gone, but he is alive to proclaim the forgiveness of sins to you. Yes, even after you have been so thick headed and slow to believe everything God has been telling you for so long, even still Jesus washes you clean of your guilt. He declares you not guilty. He says, "Peace be with you." If you have walked without recognizing him, today he has warmed your heart with his gospel. Now you know, and you get to tell everyone!

Your life's movements are filled with gospel energy and good tidings. Perhaps your coworker needs to hear what you can tell her, that Jesus forgives even her sins. Does a family member struggle with health issues, and you can speak to them about Jesus defeating death by his resurrection? Is there encouragement you can give to a brother or sister in this congregation who struggles, who is feeling alone, who hasn't heard in a while the good news of Jesus? Your movements, your walking with Jesus after Easter, takes you to all kinds of places where you overflow with joy.

Don't forget the movement in life that brings you to God's gospel in word and sacrament. Your worship is where you fill up with energy and focus and where you get to support and help each other in the faith. And then we go from here to all the stops in our lives. Tell your children. Tell your friends. Tell the people you just met. Tell the people you have known for years. Jesus has risen from the dead. He is with us by his word and supper. We have peace with God in his name. Come and see!

We are moving through our lives in an after Easter world. If we walk without recognizing Jesus, we will be sad and discouraged. Yet, when we hear the gospel, he will warm our hearts and strengthen our faith. We move with purpose and joy, because what we know, we tell. We don't need a Fitbit to monitor our movements, but think about this: How many steps are there left in your walk with Jesus? Each one moves you closer to heaven's home. You will reach your destination, because Jesus has risen from the dead. Let's walk together, as we walk with Jesus after Easter. Let's invite others to walk with us. Jesus is risen! Alleluia! SDG Amen.