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Luke 24:13-35
The Mission of the Messiah in Luke
“Living the Mission Through Discipleship”

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Today we’re wrapping up the series we’ve been in since early September. Next week we’ll begin a new series titled, “Not Famous, But Known.” There’s a specific place that title comes from, and next Sunday you’ll get to guess where it is. The first person to correctly name it, without using the internet, will get a Starbucks gift card from me.

But today, we wrap up our series on Jesus’ mission. We began this series in Luke 4, where Jesus gives his mission statement when he stands up in his hometown synagogue and reads from Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then he sits down and says, “Today, this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” In other words, Jesus is saying, “*This is my mission — and I’m accomplishing it right now.*” It’s already set in motion, even if the full reality hasn’t yet unfolded.

That’s where we started, and then over the past few weeks, we’ve looked at passages in Luke’s gospel showing ways Jesus lives into that mission — not so much what he *does*, but the *characteristics* of his ministry as he carries it out. We’ve looked at his mercy and compassion, his sacrifice, and his love that is full of grace and truth. And if you feel like I’m preaching the same sermon as last Sunday right now, that’s not surprising: I basically plagiarized last week’s sermon for the last minute. The rest is all new. Last week we looked at Jesus’ encounter with Zacchaeus (Luke 19), where Jesus declares he came “to seek and to save the lost.” Seeking lost people is a big part of his mission.

Today we finish the series with an encounter that happens *after* the resurrection — a conversation that shows what living Jesus’ mission through discipleship really looks like. So, let’s turn to **Luke 24, beginning in verse 13, and read through verse 24** to start with, and then we’ll read the rest of the passage in a moment. This is God’s word to you and me this morning...

So, two disciples — not among the Twelve, but part of the wider group that would ebb and flow some depending on where Jesus was — are walking from Jerusalem to a village called Emmaus. Luke tells us it’s a journey of about sixty stadia, which is about seven miles. Emmaus itself no longer exists, but the road is what matters here. **Emmaus is probably their home, but they’ve been in Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. And they are talking about “everything that had happened” (verse 14).**

The Greek word for “talking” is *homileo* — the root of our word *homily*. Or, what I usually call, a “sermonette.” But *homileo*, doesn’t mean one person preaching and others listening. It means to converse, to discuss deeply. They’re processing the last few days — Jesus’ death, the empty tomb, and the confusing reports that he might be alive.

As they walk, Jesus himself comes alongside them — though, Luke says, “they were kept from recognizing him” (verse 16). Something spiritual prevents them from seeing who he is. That makes sense: they wouldn’t have expected Jesus to be walking beside them, so even their own expectations aren’t helping to recognize him. Additionally, these two likely hadn’t spent three years with him as the Twelve had, so the same degree of familiarity wasn’t going to be there.

Then, as Jesus does so frequently, he asks a question (verses 17 and 19): He wants to know what they’re talking about. Luke says they stood still, their faces downcast. So, they’re grieving, but I think also they stop dead in their tracks because they can’t believe this guy doesn’t know what they’re talking about. Like, “Have you been living in a tomb?” I would have loved to read Jesus’ answer to that question, quite frankly. Instead, they say, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who doesn’t know...?”

Remember, this Passover had been part of the previous week's events. And even though that's a huge annual holiday that swelled Jerusalem with probably a few hundred thousand people, the event that many people are talking about is Jesus' death and the empty tomb. That's how they answer the question of what they're talking about: "Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in word and deed... our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be crucified. We had hoped he was the one to redeem Israel." Their words drip with disappointment. They mention the women who found the tomb empty and saw a vision of angels saying Jesus was alive — but it's clear they don't know what to make of it. They have the information, but not yet the understanding. So, let's continue on now and see how Jesus handles this and where it goes....**Verses 25-35.**

Then Jesus speaks. "**How foolish you are, and slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken!**" (verse 25). He's not scolding them in anger, but with gentle, teacherly exasperation — like when a good teacher sighs, "You're so close; you just haven't connected the dots yet." And then he walks them through Scripture — Moses and all the prophets — explaining how it all points to him. It's the greatest Bible study ever, as Jesus the living Word explains the written Word.

I imagine this conversation like a movie scene — maybe like *The Empire Strikes Back*...and sorry for the spoiler alert but the movie is over 40 years old now so if you haven't seen it yet, that's on you 😂...when Luke Skywalker has crash landed on a planet into a swamp and doesn't realize the little green creature teaching him is actually Yoda, the one whom Luke is looking for. Much the same, these two disciples don't yet realize their "traveling companion" is the resurrected Jesus himself.

When they reach Emmaus, Jesus acts as if he's going farther. But they urge him to stay because it's nearly evening. He accepts the invitation. **At the table, Jesus takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it, and gives it to them (verse 30).** He's intentionally echoing the Last Supper — and Luke's verbiage mimics Paul's description in 1 Corinthians 11, using the same four verbs, in the same order. It's deliberate. This moment is like the first post-resurrection communion.

Now, that doesn't mean it was exactly as we have communion, just as Jesus' last supper from which we get communion was more than just bread and wine. It was the Passover meal, a major feast. The meal here was also likely more than just bread — probably some fruit, olives, fish or other food items they would typically eat — but the focus is on the bread. As Jesus breaks it, “their eyes were opened, and they recognized him” (verse 31). The Greek word for “recognize” (*epignōsis*) carries the sense of relational knowing — like the deep, personal knowledge of God, and the word is often used in Scripture in that relational context.

And then in that instant, Jesus disappears. Like a divine Houdini, he vanishes. The two disciples look at each other and say, “**Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?**” (verse 32). Immediately, they get up and hurry the seven miles back to Jerusalem to tell the others. I wouldn't be surprised if they set some kind of record for their day. There, they find the eleven disciples exclaiming that Jesus has appeared to Simon Peter — and now these two add their story: “It's true! The Lord has risen!”

If there's one central truth from these events as it pertains to Jesus' mission — and perhaps from the whole sermon series and from all of Jesus' ministry — it's this: **Jesus lives his mission through discipleship.** I know that might sound obvious, but it's easy to forget. Jesus' mission wasn't simply about attracting a large crowd with catchy miracles or inspiring messages that proclaimed freedom — his mission was about forming followers who would continue his work.

There are three aspects to this central component of his mission (discipleship) in today's passage. **First, discipleship begins as a conversation.** Verse 15 says they're talking (*homileo*), which we already homileoed about, and they're “discussing” (*syzetein*) — which means to seek or examine together, to discuss, dispute, or question. So, they're conversationally wrestling together to understand Jesus — and it's just the two of them. We see that conversational discipleship doesn't require an expert in the room, it just requires two people conversing about Jesus. Once Jesus

joins in (and I think it is fair to call him an expert in this situation) he lets them speak first; he *listens before teaching*. It's two ordinary disciples, no theology degrees or titles, trying to make sense of their faith — and that's where Jesus meets them.

That's what we're doing here at Rose Hill through a ministry you *may* have heard about, called *microgroups*. **Microgroups are groups of three or four people discussing Scripture about 2 chapters at a time, on a weekly basis over roughly ten months.** There's no curriculum, no video, no expert. Just Scripture and relationship-based, vulnerable conversation wrestling with the text. That's what these microgroups are about. This ministry is growing in a structured, intentional way, but by next fall we will probably cast a very wide net to invite anyone to participate who'd like to. The model for this ministry comes straight from this passage. The point is, discipleship begins with conversation talking about Jesus and the Scriptures.

Second, their discipleship happens while walking on a road and sharing a meal — not in a religious building. So, beginning next Sunday we're cancelling worship services. 😊 Corporate worship in the Judeo-Christian tradition stretches back thousands of years, and is central to the life of a church. But most of Jesus' ministry happened in homes, on roads, along beaches, and at dinner tables. Those are the places he made disciples. That's why our church vision is: *to lead people toward Jesus where we live, work, and play*. That's what's happening here in Luke 24 — it's discipleship in the ordinary places of life.

It's on the road and at a meal. And notice the hospitality: the disciples invite Jesus to stay with them. (We don't know if this is a married couple — definitely possible — or a couple guys who lived in different homes.) They weren't planning for guests; maybe the house wasn't perfectly tidy. But the simple invitation becomes the doorway to revelation. When we make space for others through hospitality — even spontaneously — whether it's in our homes or here at church or at a restaurant or at a park (being hospitable is more an attitude of grace and welcome than cooking and hosting), God touches lives. So, discipleship can happen essentially anywhere.

Third, when their eyes are opened, the disciples don't stay at the table. They go on mission. They return to Jerusalem immediately — not waiting for daylight, not keeping it private. True discipleship always leads outward. That's what mission looks like: hearts burning with the gospel and feet moving to share it. It's about disciples who make disciples. To summarize: **Discipleship is conversation about Jesus (anchored in Scripture), in the midst of life, that leads to being on mission for Jesus.**

You know, Jesus never said, “Go make church attenders;” he said, “Go make disciples.” Sunday church attendance is part of that, but it's not the end goal. That's why this passage in Luke 24 is so important: it shows discipleship as relational, scriptural, and missional in the midst of life, any day of the week.

So, we've looked at what the passage says (what are the words on the page) and we've talked about what it means. Those are the first two questions of any Bible study. That leaves us with one more question to address: How do we respond? So, my question for us in regards to this is, in light of what we learn about discipleship in this passage: **How's your discipleship to Jesus going?** Jesus says if we want to be his disciples, we must take up our cross daily and follow him. That happens not just here in worship, but along the roads of everyday life — in your car, around your dinner table, at the office, at school, at the gym, at the retirement community, even in the church lobby.

You can disciple someone by simply saying, “Hey, I read something in the Bible this morning — could you help me understand this?” Or, “Pastor Brian just preached on this passage and I'm thoroughly confused...can you help me understand? What do you think it means? How do we live it out?” This is how we lead people toward Jesus — and how we are led toward him ourselves. Making disciples isn't just one part of Jesus' mission. It's the heart of it. He proclaimed good news, freedom, and sight to the blind — and now he continues that mission through us, as we walk with others, open Scripture, share meals, and engage in all the rest of life. As we do those things, God will open our hearts to see him more clearly. He will reveal himself to you and me and to those we do life with, just as he did in this text and throughout his ministry.

So, let's live out Jesus' mission — through discipleship that happens on the road, around the table, and wherever we go. We do this because he is risen, he is with us, and he's still forming disciples to carry his mission forward. Let's pray...Amen.