

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 17 April 2022

Sermon Title : Finding Ourselves on the Road

Speaker : Rev Shannon Chan

Text : Luke 24:13-26

INTRODUCTION

“He is risen!” “He is risen indeed!” We hear this familiar refrain each year on Resurrection Sunday. Yet, in today’s Scripture reading, the two thoroughly discouraged and dismayed disciples traveling on a road between Jerusalem and Emmaus did not seem to believe that Jesus had risen. After witnessing the humiliating and horrifying death of their friend and teacher Jesus on Friday, they would have likely hidden themselves somewhere, in shock, all through Saturday. So, whatever the prophets had foretold would have been jettisoned that Sunday morning. It also did not matter that the women who had visited the tomb that morning had returned and told them that two men with clothes that gleamed like lightning had stood before them asking why they were looking for the living among the dead. They went on to say, “He is not here; He has risen!”

The road to Emmaus story is also a story about our lives. The journey that Cleopas and his companion took from Jerusalem to Emmaus and then back to Jerusalem is a journey each of us has taken, is taking or will take. It is a journey we take repeatedly as we go through life. It is a journey of lived experiences that leads us to greater self-awareness and through which we see a greater fullness of God, of others and of the world. It is when we find ourselves on the road that: “We are on the road to discovering the Lord.”

A. On the road to discovering the Lord (Luke 24:13-24)

The Emmaus Road:

- *a liminal space (Richard Rohr) - a “threshold” space which is a necessary transition that we go through, a of space of inner crisis where human beings hate to be in, but where the God of the Bible is leading us.*
- *“somewhere between the now and the not yet”. (Ruth Hayley Barton)*
- *a place of brokenness and restoration.*

It is intriguing that the second person on that Emmaus road with Cleopas is unnamed. Perhaps this makes it easier for us to find ourselves through this story on our own Emmaus road in the “now but not yet” journey. It is where a disrupting event comes upon us or something has been torn or taken forcibly from us and whatever has precipitated that road to Emmaus experience is beyond our control....that’s the

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“now” we are in, but the “new” has not yet come. It is also a story and place of brokenness but that would lead to restoration.

Who can blame the two disciples for leaving Jerusalem? Jerusalem became a place of pain, sorrow and loss. It was a place of death of unmet expectations and huge disappointment. It was a place where their lives were broken. No one wants to stay in that kind of place.

As they walked and talked about all the things that had happened, perhaps they also talked about the things that did not happen but maybe should have. They had hoped that Jesus was the One but He was dead and there was a part of them that died with Him. Their lives, as the lives of all the disciples, were broken. Have you ever felt like you just had to get away? That life has given you more than you could handle? Have you ever been deeply disappointed, lived with unmet expectations and had your world turned upside down? Have you grieved the death of a loved one, a dream, an identity or a future? If your life has ever been broken, then you would know what it was like to be Cleopas and his companion. If your life has ever been restored or you are in the place between brokenness and restoration, then this too is your story.

- *A place of DISCOVERY or RE-DISCOVERY*

Yet, it was not brokenness but hunger for restoration that took Cleopas and his companion to Emmaus. For them, the Emmaus road became the place of discovery, or rediscovery. That despite how it feels, their brokenness is not an ending and there is more to it than we often see or know, the discovering or re-discovering of the presence of Christ in all of life.

As Ignatius of Loyola put it, It is about “Finding God in all things so that we might love and serve God in all” – Because it’s in finding God in all things, however good or however bad, that there is a breaking open and a restoring to new life, to new seeing, to new recognition, to loving God more perfectly, to serving Him more truly in all things and through it all. This takes us thereafter to something just as vital – we are invited on the road from death to life.

B. On the road from death to life (Luke 24:25-26)

Jesus asked Cleopas and his companion a rhetorical question, “*Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter into His glory?*” Of course He did!

- The goal of the Christian pilgrimage/pathway needs to be marked by surrender, the ability to trust God with all of my self and all of my life.
- It is a radical capacity to be given over to the love and will of God in profound trust just as Jesus did.
- The call to surrender is the call to come die daily

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Without surrender, nothing we do will lead us to grow deep in God. Indeed the call to surrender is the call to come die daily! It was the Apostle Paul who said, "I die daily." and that was why he lived in revival daily. When God invites us to surrender, the Triune God modelled the way. We can surrender because He first surrendered. Every year we are reminded that at the Cross on Calvary, God the Son chose to fully give in to the will of God the Father for you and me.

We are set thinking about how we experience a more complete surrender as we become like Jesus and His nature flows freely in us and through us to points where previously we were or are unlike Him (Ruth Haley Barton):

- A married couple who have been through infidelity choosing to stay true to God by working towards reconciliation. There is something more real and intimate in them now as the light of God shines through their brokenness.
- A woman/man who accepts an unwanted divorce, discovers a new found intimacy with God.
- A man/woman who loses his/her job which he/she had unwittingly allowed to define him/her, now moves with a greater sense of restedness because it created a space to find true identity in God and trust in God's ways and His provision.
- Parents who oriented their whole lives around the hope that their children would turn out a certain way, but when their children squander opportunities and their abilities, they are finally able to let go and entrust to God what is most precious to them.
- A person who discovers he/she has a terminal illness but after being angry and arguing with God, yields to God and prefers God's hand even when it is hard to understand God's heart, trusting that what satan intends for evil God intends for good.

As we walk in our journeys from Jerusalem on the road to Emmaus, Jesus is walking with us, even if we may not recognize Him.

Cleopas and his companion returned to the place (Luke 24:33) from which they had to get away. Yet Jerusalem was not only the place of death, it was also the place of life. It was not only a place of sorrow, it was a place also of joy. It was not only a place of brokenness, it is a place of restoration. Cleopas and his companion arrived back in Jerusalem with news of their Emmaus road experience only to hear that Jesus was alive, seen and present in Jerusalem.

CONCLUSION

We leave Jerusalem in order to return to Jerusalem: to face our deaths, losses, and broken lives. In so doing, may we discover that life awaits us, even as we return and recover the lost pieces of ourselves. The city that has not changed, but we have. Despite how it feels, our brokenness is not the end. As Jesus walked with Cleopas

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and his companion on that road to Emmaus, He talked with them, sat with them and fed them not just with bread but with Himself: with His body and His life, with His love, His compassion, His strength, His forgiveness and His hope, with all that He is and all that He has. He restored their life even as it was broken and He can do the same for you today if you let Him.

A. Review Sermon Application

Purpose: Reflect on how you have been embodying God's truth.

1.
 - a. How successful have you been in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do for the last FaithWalk!?
 - b. What were some challenges you faced and what would you like to celebrate?

2. Appoint someone to read Luke 24:13-26 slowly.
 - a. The Emmaus road is about discovery and re-discovery, about encountering brokenness and finding restoration in Christ.
 - (i) Are you on the road to discovering or re-discovering the Lord?
 - (ii) What evidence in your life suggests that you are on the road from death to life?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

3. “He is risen! He is risen indeed!” Cleopas and his companion were dejected and demoralized as they walked the Emmaus road. They did not believe what the prophets had foretold about Jesus’ resurrection, even as Jesus was walking alongside them.
 - a. (i) What is the attitude of someone who truly believes that Christ is risen?
 - (ii) What are some things that can hinder us from believing Christ is risen?
 - b. (i) When you encounter disappointment and brokenness, do you experience the resurrected Christ walking with you?
 - (ii) If not, what changes do you need to make in order to encounter God’s presence in your difficult situations?

4. The goal of the Christian pathway needs to be marked by surrender.
 - a. (i) What do you understand by “the call to surrender is the call to come die daily.”?
 - (ii) How surrendered are you to this call?
 - b. What is one change you need to make in your life in order to ‘die daily’ to Christ?
 - c. How can your group members help or encourage you to achieve 4b above in the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

5. Share your personal testimony on how you have encountered God and received His restorative power as you walked through a journey of brokenness.

OR

Give thanks to God for the changes you have experienced in your life when you believe that 'He is risen'.

6. With a prayer partner, seek the Holy Spirit's leading to surrender our hearts to God and to be sensitive to God's presence in all your situations - both good and difficult situations. Pray for God's strength and power to support one another in your journeys on the road.

As a group, pray that our church will live and walk as resurrected people, able to demonstrate that belief that "Christ is risen!" to the wider community around us.

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