

042323 **"Walk to Emmaus"** Luke 24:13-17

If you are like me, then you're probably baffled whenever you see celebrities doing normal things, because they really are just like us. But have you ever wondered how many famous people you've actually encountered in real life and didn't even know it?

Well, I read an article about they asked people to share their funniest stories "I met a celebrity but didn't let on that I knew who they were."

It says, "My mom is a big sports fan. One time she was shopping and saw a really large, fit-looking man who she didn't immediately recognize but seemed familiar... She thought it must have been a professional football player or something, so she went up to the only other person in the shop, who was a smaller weird-looking guy, and asked him if he knew who the athletic-looking man was. The short guy looked at my mom and said, 'That's my bodyguard. I'm Elton John.'"

We often hear stories like this through the media. By the way, in Luke's Gospel today, two people are walking and talking about Jesus. While they are walking, Jesus appears as a passerby and is talking with them, but they do not recognize him.

I've got a picture on the screen to show you today. The Road to Emmaus by Robert Zund in 1877. What this picture is a picture of the account of Jesus walking with two of his disciples to the road that leads to a village called Emmaus. By the way, "Emmaus" means warm wells or hot springs. Now this picture shows the event that happened just three days after Jesus' death, the very same day of Jesus' resurrection. These two disciples were walking to Emmaus for some reason we don't know why but they were sad because they loved Jesus. They were learning from Jesus and they believed that Jesus was the Messiah.

But they were confused because Jesus had just been sentenced to death and crucified on the cross. And they didn't understand what this meant or why Jesus had to do this. So, Jesus begins walking along the road with them. But they can't recognize him yet. He's kept them from recognizing him and he says what are you talking about and they tell him that they're sad that Jesus had died and they didn't know why.

(Close-up shot of them talking to each other are on the screen.) Jesus says to them as they're walking together, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Jesus is starting from Moses and the prophets. Jesus explains the whole Bible to them and how it's all about him, all about how Jesus was promised to come down to earth, to be born and to die for our sins and then to rise again. He wanted them to understand that what had happened to Jesus was all part of God's plan all along. So, we can have new life with him. But as he's walking on these, disciples slowly start to get it and they get excited to feel hope again.

They came to Emmaus, and the two invited the stranger to stay with them for the night, as it was getting late. Jesus agreed. (The next picture is "Supper at Emmaus" by Rembrandt in 1648.) And then as they sit down to supper Jesus takes bread, he blesses it, and breaks it, and gives it to his disciples to eat. At that moment Jesus let them recognize that it was him talking to them on the road and of course at that moment they're very excited because they did see Jesus but then He vanishes from their sight. That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem and shared with all the other disciples, 'we've seen the Lord. He was made known to us in the breaking of the bread.'

That's a really important part of the story for us because when we go to church like today how these two disciples got to know and recognize Jesus on this road is the same way we do while we go to church and we read the Bible and we think about what the Bible has to say about Jesus and how He loves us and he has died for us. Then of course we meet Jesus not with our eyes but with our faith in the words of God and in the breaking of the bread and drinking grape juice when we receive Jesus' body and blood at church.

So, in all these things Jesus is teaching these two disciples but he's also teaching us how we can come to see him not with our eyes yet, we will on the last day, but how to see him by faith and know that the Bible and the breaking of the bread all point to him.

Today's story reminds me of the Story of The Footprint on The Sand.

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed he was walking along the beach with the LORD. Across the sky flashed scenes from his life. For each scene he noticed two sets of footprints in the sand: one belonging to him, and the other to the LORD.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him, he looked back at the footprints in the sand. He noticed that many times along the path of his life there was only one set of footprints. He also noticed that it happened at the very lowest and saddest times in his life. This really bothered him and he questioned the LORD about it:

"Lord, You told me when I decided to follow You, You would walk and talk with me all the way. But I'm aware that during the most troublesome times of my life, there is only one set of footprints. I just don't understand why, when I need You most, You leave me." The LORD replied, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you, never, ever, during your trials and suffering. When you saw only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried

you."

Just as he intervened in the conversation between the two on their way to Emmaus, the resurrected Jesus is close to us and intervenes in our lives. Even in times of despair when our dreams are shattered and the things we hope for are cut off, He is close to us.

Dear beloved sisters and brothers in Christ, when was the last time you felt your heart burning? Or John Wesley used this expression "I felt my heart strangely warmed." The Lord of resurrection is walking with us and talking with us even when we are in the midst of disappointment, frustration, or trials in life. I hope and pray that you are able to see the Lord in your faith and to follow him as faithful disciples. Fairfield Grace, may God's grace, peace, goodness, and mercy be with you, with your family, with your business, with your studies, and with the lives of your children. Amen.