

Series Title: Encounter

Title: Encounter the Journey

Big Idea: The Journey prepares you for the destination.

Scripture: Luke 24:13-57

Introduction:

Last weekend was our Easter celebration here at CCH. If you attended, we celebrated the encounter of all encounters. The Encounter Mary had with Jesus which was founded on 4 truths. Jesus died... He was placed in a tomb... that tomb was empty... and He is alive. He is Risen!!! That changes everything. The resurrection solidified Jesus' victory over death. It's neat to see Jesus' resurrection, which happened centuries ago still impact lives today.

[Transition] The text we are resting in today takes us back to the same day that Mary encounters Christ but it's a scene shift to later that day... let's take a look.

(Read v.13-16)

The journey prepares you for the destination. (13-16)

The text brings us to two men who are traveling from Jerusalem to a town called Emmaus. We see it was a seven-mile walk, which took about half the day to travel. These two men were not a part of Jesus' inner circle of the 11 disciples but they were individuals who followed Jesus. They watched how he lived, they listened to what he taught and they were impacted by His love. Because they were followers of Jesus, they were most likely present when Jesus stood trial and watched as Jesus was tortured, crucified, and died on the cross. Further, because they were in Jerusalem that morning it seems that they were made well aware of the morning news that Jesus body was no longer in the tomb. Because they were followers of Christ this news directly impacted these two individuals so they began discussing it with each other as they were journeying back home to Emmaus. As they are dialoguing with each other the text tells us Jesus' walks up beside them and v. 16 says "*they were kept from recognizing him.*"

These two guys were identified as disciples of Christ meaning they physically walked with Jesus, listened to his voice, caught his nuances and they did not recognize Christ. How could they not recognize their biggest role model, the guy who changed their life? Commentators are all over the map for an explanation. One commentator said they didn't recognize Jesus because his resurrected body looked different. Another commentator pointed out the fact that the town of Emmaus is west of Jerusalem and since the two men were walking home in the afternoon the sunset in their eyes made the men unable to recognize Christ. Other commentators say it's because God blinded their eyes from being able to recognize Jesus. Others say they couldn't recognize Jesus due to demonic influence. This just goes to prove I don't have an answer. What we know is that whether it was God, the unrecognizable resurrected body or the sunset Jesus chose to not make himself known to these two men in their journey. Jesus' patience and discernment in easing the tension within the hearts and souls of these two men shows us that Jesus values the processing, the discovery, the dialogue, and the wrestling... Jesus values the journey not just the destination. As we will continue reading this narrative, we see Jesus value the journey because the journey and exploration is what prepares you for Christ; for the destination.

Haylard Sermon Illustration: This interaction with Jesus reminds me of what some have called the greatest rescue mission of World War II. Late in WWII American bombers were sent on a dangerous mission to fly over southern Europe and cripple the Nazis' oil supplies. Hundreds of crews in flying tin cans soared through storms of anti-aircraft shells and as a result, many American pilots were forced to bail from their shot-up planes. The injured airmen drifted by parachute into occupied Yugoslavia, expecting to be captured or killed.

Instead on the ground, remarkable rescue teams were already in place. Serbian peasants tracked the path of the floating flight crews. Their sole mission was to grab the flyboys and bring them to safety before the Nazis arrived to finish them off.

Risking their own lives, the peasants fed and sheltered the downed soldiers. These rescued men were in friendly hands but still on enemy soil. The flyboys still needed to escape to the evacuation site. To travel to the evacuation site, the airmen had to spend weeks following the Serbian freedom fighters, who alone knew the path. Despite the profound language barriers, the direction, the pace, and the destination were in the hands of their rescuers. The men had been saved from their enemy, but the journey had just begun. They still had to walk to freedom. All the airmen survived 500 in all were successfully evacuated.

This story paints an important spiritual reality. To be **“rescued from something sets us on the path toward something.”**¹ For the airmen it was a journey of survival. For us it’s a journey of faith. The one who saved us is now calling us to walk. It’s nonnegotiable. Though snatched from spiritual death through Jesus’ work on the cross, we soon discover that the Christian life isn’t an arrival; it’s actually the beginning...an adventure; a journey. Christ rescues us then he points us to the path of following him which is what we will see him demonstrate with these two men journeying to Emmaus.

For those of us who are believers, we are all on a journey, aren’t we? This life is an adventure filled with the ups of babies being born, marriages, laughter, promotions, relationships, entertainment, good food, and drink but this life also includes the downs with the loss of loved ones, addictions, grief, depression, and cancer. Yet, it’s hard to be patient, isn’t it? When we are journeying through the valleys of this life, we want Jesus to put our hearts at ease to bring reconciliation to end the suffering and pain yet we see Jesus with these disciples intentionally allowing them to wrestle and journey through their emotions and talk it out. Why? Because I believe the Journey prepares you for the destination. So, enjoy the journey this Christian life has to offer... savor the ups learn from the downs and allow both to prepare you for the life after death.

¹ Dave Harvey, *Rescuing Ambition*, and Pp. 63-64, “Christian Life Is a Journey, Not an Arrival,” *Preaching Today*, accessed April 4, 2018, <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/2010/september/3091310.html>.

Transition: These two disciples were not just journeying to Emmaus they were walking through a spiritual valley let's keep reading.

(Read 17-27)

The Journey contains trust and hope (17-27)

The text tells us that the two men's faces were downcast Why? They lost hope and trust. This makes sense. These two guys witnessed Jesus' ministry first hand. They saw Jesus demonstrate his overarching power over illness by supernaturally healing people and bringing them back to life. They listened as Jesus with a mere word calmed a storm and controlled the forces of nature. They were encouraged as Jesus controlled and overpowered evil spirits and demonic forces. There was nothing that could stop this guy. Jesus' life and ministry proved to these two guys that they could place their hope in him in being the Messiah; the one who was going to restore them and the nation of Israel out from underneath persecution from the Roman government and surrounding nations and place them on top. But throughout the past week they watched as their only hope was tortured, crucified and died... and now they got the news that not only is Jesus dead but his body is missing. Their hope in just being able to grieve well is shot... someone took it.

Yet, Jesus in the midst of their despair begins to minister to these two men. Isn't that awesome!!! Friends, Jesus after defeating death (though these guys don't know it yet) instead of just sorta peacing out and being like well I just accomplished everything that I came to do, he comes alongside of these two dudes traveling to Emmaus in complete despair and begins to minister to them. Our God is a God who doesn't just sit on high separate from our hurts, habits and hang-ups but the God we worship is a God who jumps right in our mess and helps us along as we journey through illness into healing, Journey through grief into peace, journey through depression into exuberance, journey through death into life. And look at how he ministers to them he brings them back to truth to scripture, to God's word. Lets read...

(Read 25-27)

Jesus reminds these two disciples of God's promise. I can only imagine what verses Jesus was pointing these disciples to. I'm guessing Jesus reminded them of how the Messiah will be rejected tortured and killed in Isaiah 53:3. Maybe Jesus recalled their attention to the Psalm 16: 8-11, where it communicates the truth that the coming Messiah will be raised from the dead. I'm guessing Jesus reminded these guys of the things He himself taught in Matthew 16:21 where he says he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things and be killed and on the third day be raised.

In order to re-instill trust and hope in the hearts in these two journeying to Emmaus Jesus brings these disciples back to Scripture back to God's word. Believers in Christ, journeying through despair or a spiritual valley take note. Believers... cling to his promises in scripture, read it, study it. This Jesus journey requires us to trust God and to walk in his hope and His Word helps us do this, so cling to it.

Transition: Eventually the men make it to Emmaus with Jesus and lets read what happens.

(Read 28-36)

The journey engages relationship. (28-36)

What is fascinating about this is Luke's inclusion of the fact that "Jesus acted as if he was going farther." Personally, I think Jesus wanted to be with these guys. I think he was setting these guys up to see if they would invite him in and they did. This gives us a glimpse of how Jesus interacts with us doesn't it. Jesus is a gentleman, love for us is what fuels him. Notice he doesn't invite himself over for dinner. He doesn't force the relationship to happen he waits until they invited Jesus in. Jesus wants to be with you friends. He desires and longs for a relationship with you, but he waits for the invite. Therefore, if you walk through this life wanting nothing to do with Jesus than you will die without him.

These men invite Jesus in for fellowship for relationship. It is within this context of having dinner and having fellowship with these guys Jesus decides to finally reveal himself to these

two men. I find it fascinating that Jesus waits until they are having dinner to reveal himself to them. I don't know if I am right but I wonder if he waits until now because they are done moving and journeying and they finally stopped to just sit in his presence and because they aren't distracted their hearts are now capable of recognizing him. I think that we can at times get so caught up in this fast-paced life, this journey of putting one step in front of the other, celebrating one birthday after another that we forget to stop and just stare at Jesus. Friends the Journey requires relationship and just like any relationship with your spouse kids or parents... relationships require dates, one on one time.

Transition: Well, these dudes realize its Jesus and Jesus peaced out and so do the two men. They jet back seven miles from where they came from Jerusalem, to tell the 11 disciples. Lets keep reading...

(Read 33b-45)

The journey rests on recognition of the resurrection (37b- 45)

So clearly the two disciples run back to Jerusalem and find the 11 disciples assembled together and they begin to tell them about the interaction they just had with Jesus on the road to Emmaus and in their home. And the text shows us that while these two guys are talking Jesus shows up among them and says "Peace be with you!" Notice when the 11 disciples see Jesus together it isn't this joyful like comforting reassurance. It says they were frightened and startled. Why? These disciples where just like the two others on the road toe Emmaus they lost hope they forgot the promises and teachings of Jesus that he would die and rise again. So much so that when they see Jesus they think he is a Ghost. Jesus therefore demonstrates to them he is who he says he is. He has the disciples to touch him and he showed them his pierced hands and feet. Vs 41 says they still did not believe so Jesus has them give him food and he begins to eat it in their presence and begins to remind them again of the promises of God.

There are a couple of takeaways that I get from this interaction with the disciples. The first is... it's ok to doubt. Jesus can work with your doubt. "Many think that doubt is the opposite of faith but it isn't. The opposite of faith is unbelief. Unbelief refers to a willful refusal to believe, or a

deliberate decision to disobey God.² Doubt is to be indecisive, uncertain. When you doubt your actually searching you haven't come down squarely on the side of disbelief. That is exactly where these disciples were. They were in the process of discovering and recognizing that this truly is the resurrected Jesus. Don't run away from doubt... lean into it because when you do you will find yourself standing in the presence of the resurrected Christ.

Jesus proves to us that he can work with doubt and he does he brings these disciples to a recognition that the resurrection was not some silly story, prophetic promise that was never fulfilled. Jesus showed these disciples that the resurrection wasn't some metaphor but that it actually happened. Our God Jesus Christ, the Savior of this world is not dead but he is alive!!! The Jesus life recognizes this truth. The journey recognizes the resurrection and walks under its covering. When your battling addiction you're doing so in light of the resurrection the defeat of that addiction, when you walking through cancer you doing so in light of the resurrection the eternal healing, when you're dealing with death, your doing so knowing its already been defeated because of the resurrection!!! He is Risen!!!.... As those under the covering of the resurrection we no longer fight for victory over sin, sickness and death. We fight from a place of victory.

Transition: Well, the disciples come to the realization of the resurrection and immediately their ready to tell everyone about it. Check it out

(Read 46-49)

The journey is filled with invitations empowered by the Spirit. (46-49)

“Evangelism is just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.” – D.T. Niles
 Jesus tells these disciples, “You are witnesses of these things.” You have witnessed me suffer and rise from the dead. Through which you have experienced forgiveness through repentance so go preach it to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. This news is not something you keep to yourself but you share with those around the world. So beggar, start telling others where you

² “RFD-Sermons-v2.5-Sample.Pdf,” n.d., accessed April 4, 2018, <http://www.roomfordoubt.com/res/uploads/press/RFD-Sermons-v2.5-Sample.pdf>.

got food. Tell your bosses your coworkers, friends, your neighbors and as you do let the Spirit guide and empower you. The journey of the Jesus life encompasses invitation.

I'll never forget hearing stories about my oldest brother who was journeying through cancer as he used that disease as a platform to invite others... nurses, doctors, friends into a relationship with Jesus. No matter what you're journeying through remember to invite others into a relationship with Jesus. Let people know where to get food.

Some of you are feeling like you're not equipped to share the gospel. You don't know what to say, you don't know how to do it. You're right you don't, but God does. Remember all throughout this narrative God was the one who opened minds and hearts not YOU!! Your job is to just invite... just invite... just invite... their response is between them and God.

Transition: Lets see how this narrative ends. Read v.50-53

(Read v.50-53)

The journey encompasses worship. (50-53)

The conclusion to Luke shows us that the disciples made a regular part of their life's rhythm to worship and praise God. Worship is an integral part of the journey. The journey we are on to heaven encompasses worship. The crazy thing about worship is that it's contagious. You see Jesus throughout his earthly ministry teach a lot of stuff but he also modeled it. He lived a life of worship. Why did he do it so he can worship himself (being that he is God) Jesus worshiped because he knew that just teaching about worship wasn't enough, he needed to be an example because he knows that as humans more is caught than taught.

Ray Picture Illustration: I saw this very thing displayed years ago on a Sunday during one of our Easter celebrations. It hit me hard when I witnessed it so much so I took a picture of it. Here it is. This is a picture of my son and his Uncle Jack. Jack was busy holding my son Rayland during worship. Now if you ever worship beside Jack on a Sunday morning Jack loves to

demonstrate his surrender and praise to Jesus by lifting his arms as we see in this picture. Ray was witnessing this to the point that it moved him to raise his hands. I love it... this picture to me demonstrates freedom, Ray just has this freedom to raise his hands even though his dad wasn't next to him to raising his hands he didn't care what people thought he raised his hands because quite simply he saw Jack doing it. Ray is too young to understand who it was Jack was worshipping but there will be a day Ray puts it all together and guess what he will know just what to do.

Friends, living lives of worship impacts those around you so Worship! The Journey encompasses worship. In light of addiction, WORSHIP, in the midst of persecution, WORSHIP, in the midst of trials WORSHIP, in the midst of watching a child be born WORSHIP. In the midst of getting married WORSHIP... navigating through cancer WORSHIP. The Journey encompasses worship.

Conclusion:

Why did Jesus not reveal himself to those disciples immediately because it shows us that often the discovery, discussion, the tension, the wrestling, the Journey prepares us for the destination. The Journey though it is difficult forces us to develop trust to keep hope. The Journey strengthens relationship and allows us to recognize the resurrection. The journey involves worship. So that when we die and we reach the destination of heaven we are prepared for not the hope but the reality of heaven. We are prepared for the eternal relationship with the resurrected King and we are prepared to Worship for all eternity. The Journey prepares you for the destination so settle in and enjoy the ride.

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