

Sermon Title: **“Foundations: Emmaus Road Cafe”**

Series: *Learn, Live, Lead*

Speaker: Pastor Damian Mericka

Text: Luke 24:13-35

## Introduction



*“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.” -Acts 13:2-3.* In Christ it is never *goodbye* but *see you later*. Transitions are hard, but at the Spirit’s leading, they can also be fruitful for the Kingdom and Glory of Jesus Christ. This world is not our home, we in Christ are here to take all of Jesus into all the world. *Together, we **learn** from Jesus, **live** like Jesus, and **lead** to Jesus.* **Foundations** is a final series of messages from my heart, as your Pastor, to you and the continuing ministry of Cornerstone

Chapel. May the lamppost shine brighter and stronger for the Glory of Jesus Christ, His Spirit pouring out in greater stride. *And above all, through fasting and prayer, let us be the Body we are purchased, resourced, and called to be- All of Jesus for all the world- **beginning with each of us!***

### I. A Road Often Traveled (Luke 24:13-20)

*“That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?” And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” And he said to them, “What things?” And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him.” -Luke 24:13-20 ESV*

A road Luke, the author notes, that reaches 7.5 miles northwest from Jerusalem to Emmaus is where we find our text this morning. Two people who were affiliated with Jesus and His movement are on this road processing everything that seemed to happen all too quickly. We don’t know who they were, how long or short their time with Jesus was, nor the role they played in His following. What we do know is that they represent what was going on in many people’s

minds regarding Jesus' crucifixion. Experiencing incredible outpourings from a Sunday Worship experience comes crashing down with the reality of Monday. Or, when we experience incredible breakthroughs and answers in the Lord only to transition into a season of difficulty and silence. The absence of Jesus in the lives of these two people is a sentiment we can connect with in our own lives perhaps.

And it is upon this road they, and we, find ourselves walking along trying to process what everything meant and would continue to mean for our lives. When things don't work out as we had hoped, as we had envisioned, this road to Emmaus becomes a place of healing as much as it is to reflect on what has happened and lament.

What I love about this passage is that we see Jesus coming up alongside them on this road, walking at their pace, pulling out from within them the thoughts on their hearts. Understand, Jesus already knows. But He wants to hear them speak it, for when we put to words what we feel or are thinking, there is a sense of affirmation that the listener cares.

***We have a Savior in Christ who meets us, walks with us, and wants us to share where we are at in this moment with Him.***

There is both reason and purpose to this experience with Jesus on our Emmaus roads. Peter writes,

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” **-1 Peter 5:6-8***

This road is also full of lions, seeking to capitalize on the opportunity these moments in our lives present. Jesus steps in to encourage us to keep our hand in His, while the enemy seeks to use our dissatisfaction to pull our hand out and walk away.

***Humble yourselves*** here in the Greek means to intentionally keep the circumstances from dictating our course of action. While we cannot always control what happens to or around us, we can control what we will do with it and how we will respond to it. Peter says we not only give it to Jesus, we ***cast***, or throw upon Jesus, our ***burdens*** or anxieties. Why? Because Jesus sees and actively ***cares*** for you. In all instances, ***humbling ourselves***, ***casting*** our ***burdens***, and Jesus' ***caring*** are all verbs- active, continual motions throughout our lives in this world.

When we disregard this, and allow our anxieties to rule the day, we give strength to our enemy. Therefore, we need to be ***sober-minded***, calm, focused, and ***watchful***, or being on guard knowing that on this road there are lions.

Now, back to our text, we find Jesus is not recognized by the two travelers. Why? For whatever reason, Luke notes this was God's intention. With faces that illustrated the sadness of their hearts, they affirm how public and widespread the crucifixion of Jesus was. They affirmed the religious leaders of their day along with Rome saw to His death. They speak from the

perspective of those who experienced His power and hoped in His words. They affirm he was a prophet, mighty or able, to speak what He knows as truth and bring this truth into our circumstances and world. Those who were sick knew healing, those in bondage knew deliverance and freedom, and those guilty knew forgiveness. He brought God into their lives in ways they could see, feel, and know. There was such a confidence, such an intimacy, it was almost as if He was God. Yet, He was crucified. *What their hope had ordered was not what was handed to them.*

## **II. I Didn't Order This (Luke 24:21-24)**

*“But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” -**Luke 24:21-24***

***Had hoped*** here is more than wishful thinking. In the Greek it implies the marriage of *all that they believed with the promised fulfillment experienced* for their lives. To ***Redeem*** means to release. Over time- each day with, every word spoken by, and every miracle done through- Jesus grew their faith in Him and all their hope found a place in Him. They looked to Jesus as their liberator from all the captive shackles they were born into under Rome. They looked to Jesus as the forgiveness from all the idolatrous and disastrous decisions their ancestors had made. In a sense, they experienced in a very real way the shackles of sin we are born into. Consider Paul's words,

*“Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.” -**Romans 5:12-14***

Comparatively, there is little that is defeating to us like the sense of not making progress. Whether we study hard only to not make the grade we want, diet consistently only to stand upon a scale that seems to continue moving in the wrong direction, wait patiently for love, a job, or the transition of better days we have been praying for- unmet expectations hit us hard and for many this becomes a place of defeat. And it is in this heart posture the lions snatch people up on that road to Emmaus.

But we are not abandoned. Just as one man brought us all into the bondage of sin, another will bring freedom and deliverance. Jesus does not leave us to be swallowed up in the lament of life happening differently than we planned or hoped. He comes alongside to encourage us to stay the course and continue to trust Him.

The two travelers share the news that it seems like Jesus is up to something in other people's lives- just not theirs. While angelic, some women, and some men who followed Jesus testify that He is alive, for these two on the road to Emmaus Jesus was dead. He may be alive to the angels, may be able to be seen by those who probably were closer and, in a sense, deserved Jesus more than they, for these two Jesus was as gone or as good as dead. And it is here their grieving continues to be heartfelt.

On a side note, I want to affirm Luke's narrative here matching the eyewitness account of the other Gospel's witness. Angels announce, women see first, then the word reaches the eleven disciples and beyond.

There will be times when we do not get what we order. The reason is because, unlike those taking our orders in coffee shops or restaurants, God sees our needs and understands us better than we do ourselves. We may order something feeling like we are ready for it or it's going to bless us, yet God serves us something different.

Consider the Proverb,

*“The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out. Many a man proclaims his own steadfast love, but a faithful man who can find?”*

**-Proverbs 20:5-6**

In this wise saying we see that our hearts are deep pools, like the ocean that has uncharted regions that human eyes have yet to see or hands have yet to touch. Such depths in our hearts are as clear to God as what is on the surface. Jesus is drawing out from our hearts, just as He is doing to our two travelers on this road to Emmaus. Yet, if we cry out we are ready to receive without taking the journey, we will find our boasting is short lived and short reaching. Many in this are too eager to have what they want, even to the degree they are not willing to allow God to prepare them for His best in their lives.

Yet, why does God allow or even bring hardships upon us? Why must we go through difficult seasons such as this, where we feel Jesus is far away from us? These two travelers have been in this place for three days. Three long days that seem like God is done, and hope goes unanswered. ***Three days can seem like a lifetime!*** While God is pulling at the depths of our heart, and it may seem like a long time, He also reveals His heart that we can lay hold of and trust Him through the process. Consider His words through the Prophet Hosea,

*“Come, let us return to the Lord; for he has torn us, that he may heal us; he has struck us down, and he will bind us up. **After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up,** that we may live before him. Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord; his going out is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth.”*

**-Hosea 6:1-3**

All of God's promises toward us find their reach into our lives through His Son, Jesus. He is at work in us and through us to see us mature into His Son. Paul notes this,

*“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” -Romans 8:29*

Another way of looking at this is we are caterpillars on the way to becoming butterflies. Yet, God wants to teach us to fly *before we have wings*. Jesus is the goal; and we are all at different stages. We are all at different places on the road to Emmaus. This isn't something that God just downloads into us; it's a journey He transforms us along the way on.

While we may be served something we didn't order, God serves us what we need.

*“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.” -Titus 2:11-14*

### **III. Seeing Our Faithful Savior (Luke 24:25-35)**

*“And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, but they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?” And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.” -Luke 24:25-35*

**Foolish ones**, in the Greek is *foolish men* meaning *not seeing what is in front of them*. We must note the Sovereignty of God in this. Though God hid Jesus' identity from them, the Scripture they had with them and should have been led by it beyond their physical sight. They affirmed Jesus was a prophet, affirmed what He did, yet did not hold on to what Jesus said.

Then, in our text, they came to see Jesus as there with them the whole time. They in turn returned and allowed their voices to join in with the others that Jesus is alive, His movement continues, and God's Kingdom is coming. Oh saints, let us testify that Jesus is with us right here and right now!

I don't know where you are right now. You may feel Jesus is at work in other people's lives while absent in yours. You may feel sorrow and, in a sense, abandoned with our (my family's) transition. You may be at a place God is serving you the wrong order. Today's message

reminds us, God meets us on the Emmaus Road and is at work transforming us from the inside out. Do not be discouraged but encouraged. You may not have received what you ordered, but you received what God knows you need in this moment. Trust Him. Keep your hand in His.

*“John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” **-Revelation 1:4-6***

The Emmaus Road is a place of transformation, not arrival.

Remember this.

God has gotten your order more right than you may realize in the moment.