

# THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

Easter Sunday, April 8, 2007 | Prestonwood North | Prosper, TX | David H. McKinley

Some of my best and worst life memories involve road trips. While road trips can provide the backdrop for some great memories, more often than not, they provide a recipe for disaster. They can be longer, harder and more difficult than expected. The result? Frustration, fatigue and exhaustion.

Many today are making the journey of life with the same experience and emotions. Some people may be burned out. They have lost their passion for life. Although many people started the "journey of life" with good intentions, they are now overcome by stress, strain and frustration. Some have decided to walk out on families, churches and responsibilities.

Has life become too fast and furious for you? Are you running on empty with exhaustion tugging at your mind and heart?

Have you said this lately? "I'm tired!" Are you tired, exhausted, frustrated and overwhelmed by feelings of doubt, disappointment and defeat?

Let's read Luke 24:13-35 (ESV):

<sup>13</sup>That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. <sup>16</sup>But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. <sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>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?" <sup>19</sup>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, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and rulers delivered Him up to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. <sup>21</sup>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. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, <sup>23</sup>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. <sup>24</sup>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." <sup>25</sup>And He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. <sup>28</sup>So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if He were going farther, <sup>29</sup>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. <sup>30</sup>When He was at table with them, He took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>And their eyes were

opened, and they recognized Him. And He vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>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?" <sup>33</sup>And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, <sup>34</sup>saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of the bread. ■

This is an interesting state of affairs in the lives of these two disciples making a road trip. As they were walking, they were talking about the week, and their faces and voices told the story.

Sadly, many people in our world—including some Christ-followers—are living passionless lives. Passion is what makes life sizzle, but in passionless lives, the energy and spark fizzle. Passion is gone, dreams are dashed and hearts are heavy.

## Reflect on Life's Disappointments

The length of the journey allowed these two disciples to reflect on the events of the week. They were venting their fears, disappointments and frustrations. The impact of this conversation was evident on their faces (see verse 17). This was not an encouraging discussion, but a rather discouraging and disappointing conversation.

> **Life doesn't turn out the way we plan.**

Are you disappointed by your experiences and fail to see God's presence? What do you think and talk about in your more reflective moments?

Many of us spend time thinking and talking about what is missing and what has proved disappointing in our lives. We often hash and rehash frustrations, injury, letdowns and places where life didn't turn out like we hoped.

"we had hoped" (Luke 24:21)

> **God doesn't work in the ways we expected .**

Since we are limited in our perspective and understanding, we can live disappointed in God's work and plan for our lives.

"Disappointments, His appointments." —Vance Havner

The curious fact in Luke 24:13-35 was that these disciples had not only seen the tragedy of the cross, they had also heard of the victory of the resurrection, and yet, they did not believe!

The issue was not a problem with knowledge; it was an issue of faith. (See Luke 24:21-24)

- They **knew** His name and where He was from
- They **knew** He was a prophet
- They **knew** He was mighty in word and deed
- They **knew** He was crucified
- They **knew** He promised to redeem Israel
- They **knew** others said He had risen from the dead

Life's difficulties and disappointments can take us beyond the realm of knowledge and push us to the edge of real faith.

It's not what you know that matters in life; it's what you believe!

**Refocus on God's Promises**

<sup>25</sup>And He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

<sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?" <sup>27</sup>And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

—Luke 24:25-27 (ESV)

As we read this Scripture passage, it is hard not to hide a smile. We recognize who they are talking to, but they didn't. We want to shout, "Hello. You're talking to Jesus!"

But how often does this happen to us as well?

Jesus came alongside and pointed them to the witness of the Word. He did not process their emotions or analyze their experience. He pointed them to the source of truth that would revolutionize their perspective and understanding.

They needed clarity and contrast to grasp the reality of all Christ had done. They needed to be reminded of the things they should have known and remembered.

"... beginning with Moses and the prophets..." —Luke 24:27 (ESV)

What a Bible conference! It was not a theological lecture; it was a discovery of *who* Christ is and *what* Christ has done.

The Old Testament is the shadow of things to come. The New Testament reveals the substance of the shadows. Jesus revealed Himself as Messiah. Where could He have gone in Scripture?

- The Seed of the woman (whose heel was bruised), Genesis 3:15
- The Ram at the Altar, Genesis 22
- The High Priest
- The Passover Lamb
- The Captain of the Lord's Army with Joshua
- The Kinsman-Redeemer in Ruth
- The Son of David seated on the throne
- The Suffering Servant, Psalm 22
- The Good Shepherd, Psalm 23
- The Man of Sorrows, Isaiah 53

Read Isaiah 53.

This same passage was used by Philip in Acts 8 as he inquired to know the meaning of the prophets.

Not just tragedy, but triumph! Jesus is alive! He is not the Jesus of our imagination; He is the Christ of triumph by revelation!

They heard the reports, but in this moment on a dusty road, they were experiencing an encounter with the One who is "the Way, the Truth and the Life."

This is the Christ I proclaim to you today and the promise God speaks to every difficulty, disappointment and defeat. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God! We haven't gathered to reflect on Christian tradition. We are here to celebrate the truth of who Christ is and what He came to do for us. Refocus on God's promise today!

## Recognize the Nearness of God

Read Luke 24:31-32.

When Jesus was revealed in these disciples' despair, His presence renewed their dreams for tomorrow.

Rocky made a comeback this fall, but Rocky didn't coin the phrase, "burning heart." It was the disciples on the Emmaus Road.

"burning hearts" = purpose and passion restored

Immanuel, God with us.

## Renew Strength Through Hope

Read Luke 24:33-35.

Daily strength has everything to do with hope. The broken dreams, dashed hopes and discouraged countenance of these disciples were replaced and renewed with God's strength and power.

"Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present."

This is the effect of God's Word on hungry and hurting hearts. How often I have been restored and renewed by God's truth!

Back to Jerusalem. This was the very scene of their disturbance and disappointment, but they were different. Nothing had changed in time or circumstance, but there was a drastic change of heart. So great was the change of heart that these disciples changed the world!

A couple of "discharged disciples" were "supercharged for life." Their journey of life was now powered by the resurrected Christ!

It all started on a road trip—a time, a place and a moment when they met Jesus on the journey of life.

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This edited message was originally preached from the pulpit of the Prestonwood North Campus, Prosper, Texas, on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2007, by David H. McKinley.

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