



Going Beyond the Sermon

Sunday, April 18, 2021 – Dr. Matt Russell

“The Hidden Place of Love”

Luke 24:36-48

Bible S.W.A.P.

S-Scripture

³⁶ While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” ³⁷ They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹ While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.

W-What Does it Say and What Can I Obey?

For this sermon series, the Going Beyond the Sermon notes will look to each Scripture passage for direction in discipleship. We will make connections with the stages of discipleship being experienced by the characters in the stories and where we are in the discipleship journey. For the “What Can I Obey?” portion of study, we will be challenged to take a next step of faith, with the goal of using the passage and notes as a tool for processing and learning to direct ourselves to grow in closeness to Christ.

Read all of Luke 24, looking especially for the words that describe the emotions and reactions of Jesus’ followers. They are just discovering that the tomb is empty, that Jesus IS ALIVE, and they are emotionally charged. Some of the words that jump off the page are perplexed, terrified, bowed to the ground, amazed, talking, and sad.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus are approached by Jesus and do not recognize him. They tell him what they have heard about the “things that have taken place in Jerusalem.” They are trying to make sense of the stories of the women and other eyewitnesses. And Jesus interprets himself to them. Their eyes are beginning to open, and they thirst for more. They urge him strongly to “stay with us.”

And Jesus does stay with them. In the breaking of bread, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. (Luke 24:31) Jesus goes one step further in his mission to make himself known – he goes to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem lets them see his hands and feet. He eats with them and “opens their minds to understand the scriptures.” He declares them witnesses and promises to send the Holy Spirit to empower them in their new mission.

The stage of discipleship depicted here is called “Come, Follow Me.” Read Matthew 4:18-22 and hear Jesus’ first invitation to the fishermen Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew and another pair of brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. Like these fishermen, people in this stage sense the need to move beyond learning about Christ and decide to follow Jesus. Their minds are opened to the Scriptures through study and their hearts are turned more and more to Christ through worship. They seek and find fellowship with other Christians and change their actions and habits through spiritual practices of prayer, Bible study, accountability, and financial giving.

A-Apply

Persons in the “Come, Follow Me” stage of discipleship are characterized by “doing” rather than “being.” They are often active in church and community life, enthusiastically enjoying serving Christ and others, To determine if this is your stage, read the following statements and see if they apply to you at this time in your life.

I attend public worship regularly and see the need to pay attention to God every day.

I receive God’s love and offer it to others.

I am opening up to Jesus through daily prayers, scripture, and devotional reading.

I have accepted Christ, joined the church, and seek to become more like Jesus and to serve others.

I am serving others and want to discover how God has gifted me and is helping me grow.

I am giving financially more and more regularly.

If these statements describe where you are currently, it could be that this has been your “home base” for quite some time. Because these habits do build our faith and are highly valued in the church, it is possible to get stuck in this stage. In fact, more than 50 percent of church members are in this stage. For you, the next step is to remember that the Christian life is a journey of many twists and turns and changes to come. To move from “doing” for Christ to “being” with Christ involves surrender. An excellent next step for this stage is to connect with a small group (no more than 8-12) of fellow Christians whom you can trust and share with on a deeper level that gets to the core of life’s challenges.

P-Pray*

Picture yourself as Jesus, standing on the outside of the group of disciples. You notice their frightened faces when, at first, they don’t realize it is you. So you draw near to them and reveal your heart and wounds to them. You make yourself available and vulnerable for these whom you have love. You open your own heart and mind, making yourself known to whom you will. Notice that the recognition happens slowly for some, so you wait, respecting their need to process all that has happened.

What has the Living Christ been trying to help you see?

*Each passage in this sermon series invites us to imagine the scene. We will use guided imagery from “Christheart” by Jeanne Miley, as prayer prompts. This week, the prompt is Making All Things New, Day Five, p. 286.

**To learn more about the Stages of Discipleship, go to
www.chapelwood.org/mynextstep.**

*Going Beyond the Sermon is written by Teresa Rossy, Director of Grow Ministries,
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Source material is quoted throughout. The sermons are streamed online, and worship is in person at 9:00 a.m. and 11:15 a.m. in the Sanctuary of our Greenbay campus. Go to www.chapelwood.org for details.

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