



VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

On the Road

EASTER

Luke 24:13–34

Tim Badal | April 9, 2023

I am just so very thankful for the opportunity we have this morning to open up God's Word, to gather together under this singular theme, that Jesus—Who died on the cross for our sins—is no longer in the grave, but He is risen, just as He said He would do.

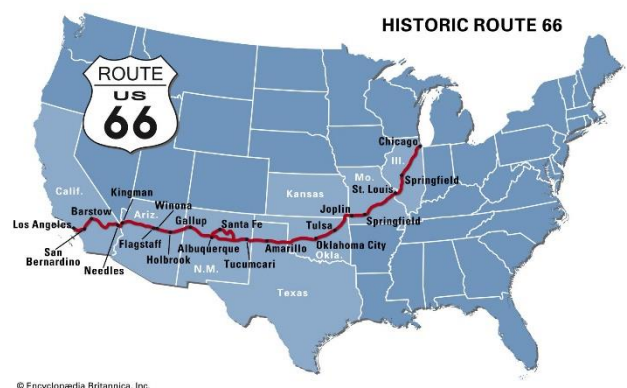
We welcome those of you here in this room and online, and ask you to open your Bibles to Luke 24 and follow along as we read these verses. We don't often hear this story on Easter when we normally focus our attention, rightly so, on the garden and the empty tomb. We usually focus on the first encounters with the risen Savior and Lord, with Mary and Jesus' mother and His closest disciples who were in the upper room. We talk about Thomas, who doubted, but then believed. All of these conversations are awesome opportunities for us to see the risen Savior and Lord at work.

But this morning I want to focus on Luke 24, the story about two disciples who were leaving Jerusalem on that Easter Sunday, probably later in the morning. After all the events of Good Friday had transpired, they were heading home. So this morning we're going to go on a journey with them. The text in Luke 24 tells us these two men were on their way home on the road to Emmaus. Roads are things we travel each and every day. You traveled roads to get here. We call roads different things. We call them streets, avenues and alleys. Our bigger streets are called highways and interstates. All of them just move us from point A to point B. They take us from where we were to where we're going.

Some roads we know like the back of our hand because we travel on them every day. It might be our commute to work, our commute to school, the drive to our parents' home or our friends' houses. We know every turn, every curve and every speed limit along the way. As a matter of fact, it can almost be boring and we stop seeing things or experiencing the journey.

But there are roads, streets and pathways that are so remarkable for different reasons that we stop and take them in. We experience them.

I did some research this past week in preparing this message, asking what are some of the most famous roads? The first one that came up was Route 66. Have you driven Route 66 before, from Chicago to Santa Monica? This is the mother of all roads. This is a road that gives you the American experience. On this road, you can travel back into yesteryear, into the golden age of cars and highways. You will see drive-ins, diners, and yes, even dives. You'll experience the nostalgia of Americana. You'll experience what it was like back in the day, when there were no interstates, when Radiator Springs was booming. Route 66 is a highway many of us will never forget. Sadly, because of interstates, Route 66 has already seen its best days and we're moving on.



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There's another road that I think is important: the Pacific Highway 1. How many have driven that road before? Let me tell you that you don't want to drive it. You want to be the passenger on that road. I drove it with my wife and our three kids. Amanda



enjoyed it; the boys enjoyed everything, but all I did was get yelled at. Every time I tried to look at what they were pointing out, I would slightly go into the gravel and I'd hear, "Get back on the road!" Then I replied, "But I want to see what you're seeing."

So if you're going to do Pacific Highway 1, make sure you're in the passenger seat. All the beauty of the Pacific coastline is on one side and the glorious Sierra Nevada Mountain Range is on the other side, with all their curves and the twists. It's a beautiful and memorable drive.

There are other drives that are shorter but also memorable. How many have been on Lombard Street in San Francisco? It's only a couple blocks long but is known as the crookedest street in the world. It doesn't have much going for it, other than you have to traverse all kinds of curves along that two-block course. People flock there because of its characteristics. It's unlike any road or street you'll ever drive.



There are other streets that, to be honest, are not much more than what our streets are here. Route 47 and Galena Boulevard don't seem any different. It's what's alongside the street, or it's who is on the street, that you want to see.



This is Rodeo Drive in California. How many have driven Rodeo Drive? It really isn't much; it's only two miles long. You're there, not because of the street, but because of who you might see on the street. Some Hollywood actress or actor; some celebrity. Or you want to shop the most pricey stores in our country, hoping to get a glimpse of some favorite celebrity along the way.

Probably the most iconic of all roads—in fact, the most photographed and the most used in our films and movies—is Monument Valley Highway. This one is known, not because a lot of people have driven it, but for the iconic views. There's not really a reason to travel this road. The road is not all that glamorous; it's a pretty straight shot. It's all about the landscape. People drive this road to put themselves back into famous movies and moments in film.



Now, let's be honest. All of these roads are made with similar material—asphalt, concrete, brick. All of them are made with hard structures, things we use in everyday life. All of them are standard in their width and ability to take cars. So what is it that makes it a road? It's what you experience while you're on it. Roads are all the same in a lot of ways; it's what you experience on them that makes them either mundane or memorable.

In Luke 24, we're given the story of two disciples who are walking on a road that goes from Jerusalem to Emmaus. It was a seven-mile journey that would take them about four and half hours to traverse. So these guys are walking from the capital city of Jerusalem to the suburban town of Emmaus.

We're told that one is named Cleopas; the other is unnamed but also a follower of Jesus Christ. It seems as if they were distant followers because they really don't know what He looks like. Even when they're talking with Him later in the story, they're not sure who He is. The Bible doesn't tell us anything about the road itself, what it's made of or what's going on beside it. What is significant is what happens while they are traveling on it. As a result, it's now one of the most well-known roads in all the Bible. This was where these men met Jesus.

You and I are on a road, a path. The Bible calls life a road that leads to one of two destinations. The thing that determines our destination at the end of this life is how we answer this question: "Have I met Jesus as I've walked this road? Have I talked with Jesus along the way?"

These two disciples left Jerusalem with one thought on their minds, but Jesus is going to change their minds and their lives forever. Follow along as I read this story, beginning in Luke 24:13:

¹³ That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ 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.

These men thought Jesus was a stranger and their mood was one of immense sadness. Verse 14 tells they were discussing all the things that had happened. They had been in Jerusalem. We don't know if they were there for the parade on Palm Sunday when Jesus was ushered into the city, being proclaimed the King of kings and Lord of lords. We don't know if they were there when Jesus was arrested. We don't know if they were part of the crowd who changed their proclamation from "Hosanna!" to "Crucify Him!" We don't know if they saw Jesus being beaten and abused. Did they see Jesus wearing a crown of thorns? Did they see Him carrying that cross? Did they see Jesus drop the cross, then Simon of Cyrene being commissioned to carry it for Him? Did they see Jesus hanging on that cross? Did they see the nails in His hands and feet? Did they see Jesus being mocked and reviled by the soldiers as He hung there, suffocating on the cross of Calvary? Did they see the spear go into His side? Did they see the blood and water flow from Jesus' body? Did they hear Him cry out and give up His Spirit at the end of His life? Did they see Jesus' body coming off that cross, being wrapped in burial clothes and taken away to a grave to be buried?

If they had hung around, that's what happened that week. Now, the text tells us these followers of Jesus were sad. On this road, they were in a place of great disappointment, which leads to the first question we need to ask ourselves this morning because we too are on a road, on a journey.

Am I on a road that is only bringing disappointment?

Why were they disappointed? Because they had gone to Jerusalem believing Jesus was going to accomplish what He said He was going to do. He was a man Who had done mighty things, marvelous things, miraculous things. Jesus had said He was going to overthrow the kingdom and upend tyranny. He was going to set the captive free, give sight to the blind and raise the dead. But now, three days after His death, He's still dead. Although there was word that His body was gone from the grave, nobody had seen Him—at least these two disciples hadn't. They had put all their hope and trust in Jesus, but He had let them down.

It would be like rooting for your favorite team for an entire season, believing all the press about them, only to reach the championship game where they laid a dud. As you would leave that stadium and the excitement of what you thought would happen, you would be devastated.

Some of you this morning have come here expecting life to look different. You had high hopes for that person you fell in love with, that job you had gotten, that promotion you received, that car or home you bought, that child you raised—whatever it is that you thought would bring you "it"—but now you're disappointed. Your hopes had been so strong but now they've been squelched.

These men had had their dreams dashed, and some of us are here today with dashed hopes and dreams. I don't think it's possible to understand the deep sadness these men felt. They were hoping for everything, but as far as they could see, they now had nothing. Then this stranger approaches them and starts a conversation:

¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ 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.

¹⁸ 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?" ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. ²¹ 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. ²² Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ 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. ²⁴ 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."

Here are men whose hopes are dashed, whose dreams are destroyed, then this stranger asks them, "What have you been talking about?" So they tell Him the story about this Jesus who began so well, who brought the promise of a bright future for Israel and God's people, who now was dead. What the men were describing was a road that seemed to be a dead end.

No doubt at some point you have found yourself at a dead end. Which means you have to turn around. You have to find a different way. These men were headed home, trying to figure out what they would do next, now that Jesus was gone. What should they invest their time, money and energy in now? Where should they turn for the spiritual answers they were looking for? They were looking for a different road.

Am I on a road that is full of detours?

That's what disappointment and discouragement bring us. When we find ourselves being let down on the roads we're on, we look for another road. "Okay, this person wasn't what I hoped for, so maybe a new possession will be my answer. Or maybe it's not a possession, so I'll find it in pleasure. Maybe it's not pleasure, so I'll look for it in prestige." We find ourselves looking for all kinds of detours. But at some point, each detour still turns out to be a dead end. They lead us nowhere.

Last fall our church studied the book of Ecclesiastes. As an old man, King Solomon wrote that each pursuit in this world turned out to be meaningless. They didn't get him where he wanted to go. These men on the road to Emmaus believed that Jesus had failed to do what He promised, so they were going to find another team to root for. They would have to get on another band wagon, because the Jesus they had known was gone.

Look at how they spoke of Him. In verse 19, they use the phrase, "He was." They say Jesus of Nazareth was a mighty prophet of God—past tense. He isn't that anymore. He used to be mighty, but He no longer is. Some of us have consigned Jesus to the past, thinking, "Easter is great to celebrate because Jesus lived back then, but He's not around anymore. Let's be honest. Who rises from the grave? Who comes back to life?"

Notice in verse 21 how negative they are: "We had hoped. We had put our faith and trust in this Jesus, but now that hope is gone." Their hopes had been dashed, so they weren't going back to those hopes. Those hopes were dead, gone and consigned to the past. They continue, "And now it's the third day." The disciples of Jesus had been told that on the third day, something was going to happen. Jesus told them He was going to tear down the temple and then built it back up in three days. He was talking actually about His body going to the grave and being raised up. But now that third day was almost over and even though there were rumors that His tomb was empty, they finish by saying, "We didn't see Him. We've heard about angels and an empty tomb, but nobody has seen him." So even though Jesus was standing right beside them, they still couldn't buy it.

Some of you have come here this morning, but let's be honest: You came, not because this was where you wanted to spend your Easter morning, but because someone asked you to be here. Maybe Mom said, "You know, it's Easter Sunday. Can you please make me happy and come this morning?" Maybe your spouse told you, "I want all of us to be in church together."

If this is you, I'm so glad you're here, but you may find yourself walking the road of life, full of disappointments. You've heard about Jesus, but you've consigned Him to the past. You're wondering why we're making such a big deal about a dead man. Why are they making such a big deal about someone in history? There have been other great men and women in history, but we don't dedicate a whole service and fill a whole building and sing a bunch of songs about that person. What's the big deal about Jesus?

The big deal is because Jesus is standing right in front of you. He's the risen Savior and Lord. As you're walking through life, as you're walking down these detours of disappointment, Jesus is standing there, and He's saying, "You don't know the rest of the story." So Jesus begins to tell the story to these men:

²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory? " ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

²⁸ So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going farther, ²⁹ 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. ³⁰ When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹ And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight. ³² 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? " ³³ And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Am I on a road that gets me to my destination?

I don't know where you are on your journey down the road of your life, but I do know that Jesus wants to walk with you. He wants you to know all the things He has to say about Himself. He wants you to know that everything that has been written in the Scriptures about Him is true. And not only are these things true, but He also wants you to believe that He is alive. He's our Savior and He's inviting us to walk with Him. All it takes is for us to welcome Him into our lives.

Those two men invited Jesus into their lives. They said, "Come and eat with us." Because they invited Him into their lives, their eyes were opened. They began to see more and more of the story.

I would love for you to invite Jesus into your life this morning. Only when you receive the risen Savior and Lord will you be on the road that leads you to the right destination. The only road that gets us to God is the road that is Jesus. It was only days before this encounter that Jesus told His disciples, "I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life" (John 14:6). Literally, He was saying, "I am the only road that gets you to God."

I know some of you are trying to figure out how to find this life of contentment, hope and joy. The only way to gain these things is to walk the road with Jesus. You need to live with Him, follow Him. He tells us that when we invite Him into our lives, He comes in and fellowships with us. He teaches us everything we need to know in order to walk together with Him. It's then and only then that we will be on the road that leads us to God.

So stop walking life's road alone. Stop walking with misinformation. Instead, invite Jesus into your journey. As you do, you will find—as these men did—the immense joy of realizing that Jesus is no longer in the grave. Rather, He is risen, just as He said. Because of this, everything else he says about Himself, everything He says about us, is absolutely right and true. So let us give our lives to Jesus. Let's walk with Jesus. In doing this, we will experience His goodness and grace every step of the way.

If you're not sure how to start that journey with Jesus, stop by our Welcome Center. We want to tell you more about how you can follow Jesus. It begins with a simple prayer: "Jesus, will You walk with me? Will You talk with me? I believe with all my heart that You died for me, You were buried for me and You were raised from the grave for me, so that I might have new life in You."

If you believe that in your heart, the Bible says Jesus will enter your life and He will be with you forever. This means that on the day of judgment, when you are standing before God Almighty, you will enter the heaven you're looking for, because God says He is the way, He is the truth, He is life.

This is the story of Easter. This is the impact of the risen Savior and Lord. My prayer is that you will receive Him and will allow Jesus to start walking with you. Amen?