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Let's Take a Walk: A Journey That Changes Everything

Scripture: Luke 24:13-34

Summary: In the first in a series entitled *Let's Take a Walk*, Pastor Jonathan expounds on Luke 24:13-34 and the importance of a daily walk with Christ that includes study of the Word of God.

Recently we began a new year. 2012. We began a journey that will take us to places that right now we don't have any idea where we might end up, taking us on a path that we don't know what it's going to look like and situations where we may not know what to do, understanding that in the days ahead we will be faced with situations that we perhaps have never faced before, a road that we have never traveled before, yet in our lives and hearts we have to understand that God's desire, His passion, is that He will travel that road with us each and every day.

That's why we focus this year, this week, this day on studying the Word of God, of understanding what the Word of God says and learning what it is that He has to say to us. That is why we have those devotionals that we wanted to give out to all of our families here in our church, so that together we can travel this road, that we can learn together each and every day of this year what God's Word says to us, so that we will know how to react and how to respond and how to truly live out every day of our lives exactly the way that God wants us to. That's why it is so vitally important to do so, of knowing what God's Word says.

At the beginning of every year, we all have good intentions. I have no doubt that on January 1 of this year that many people stood up and made the commitment, they made the decision that "This year I'm going to do things differently. This year I'm going to read through the Word of God. I want to read through the entire Bible." And probably a few days in, maybe a week in, maybe a little longer, there will come a point where they will sit back and think, "I can't really do it. I can't really make it," and they fall by the wayside, and all of those commitments and decisions that started with good intentions quickly fall away.

So many of us have great intentions, but yet we never accomplish what it is that God has called us to do, to do whatever it is that God wants for us, to experience all that God wants for us. We start with good intentions, but then it falls down.

It reminds me of a story I heard this week of a lady, a single mom who had four young children. They lived in a tough part of town. They didn't have a lot of resources, they didn't have a lot of

money, and she did the best that she could. She worked two jobs to raise these children, and so each and every day she worked her hardest and walked out and got on the bus and went to work to provide for her kids because she wanted to make sure that those four boys had everything they needed. So she worked hard every day, six days a week, two jobs.

Those boys started growing up and they went off to school and went into elementary school, then middle school, then high school, and because of her pouring herself into them and working hard to make sure that they were successful, the kids started doing really well in school. They started doing great, and in fact when they graduated from high school they'd all done so very well that every one of them earned a full scholarship to college.

So they went off to college and they were successful there. They graduated and went out and found incredible jobs making lots and lots of money. A few years went by, and now all four of those boys were very wealthy. Their mom was still in that same house, so the boys got together and decided, "We want to do something nice for our mom. She did so much for us. She worked so hard to bless us. We want to bless her, and now that we have all of this stuff, all of the resources, we want to make sure that we bless her."

So the oldest son said, "You know what I want to do? She's always lived in that same little house and she's always said she wants a nicer home, so I'm going to build her the nicest home that I can afford." So he went and bought a piece of property and built a home that had twenty-one rooms in it. Bedroom after bedroom, bathroom after bathroom, an incredible kitchen, porches that wrapped around the front of the house. An incredible house with an incredible view. And he was so proud of himself. He spent hundreds and hundreds of thousands of dollars on that house.

The second son said, "I want to do something, too, and now that she's going to have that really nice house, I know that one thing she always enjoyed doing is watching movies and the classics like *Gone With the Wind* and all of those great movies. I'm going to build her a home theater." So he went out and spent \$100,000 to put in a state-of-the-art home theater with Dolby surround sound and the projector and the screens, and it even had a popcorn maker in the corner of the room. It was beautiful.

The third son said, "I know she's never had a car; she's always had to ride the bus or walk everywhere she went, so I'm going to buy her a car." So he went down to the local Mercedes-Benz dealership and bought her a car for \$122,000 and delivered it to her house and put it in the driveway.

The fourth son, after seeing what the other three had done, said, "I want to do something special, too, and the one thing that she's always enjoyed doing was reading the Word of God. She read it to us when we were kids and I know it was so important to her, so what I'm going to do, because she's getting older and she can't see like she once did," he went out and found a college that was doing research and they had trained a parrot to recite the entire Bible. So he went to the school and offered them \$100,000 to buy this parrot that would read the Bible to his mom.

The school, of course, took the \$100,000 and he took that parrot to his mom and he was so excited because now, no matter how old she got, no matter how blind she might get, she could always experience and enjoy the Word of God.

Well, after all this was done, the four boys went back to visit their mom and they gathered around with all their families, and the mom said, "I want to talk to you boys," and she got them together in a room and looked at them and said, "You boys are so special to me and I love you so much." She looked at the oldest son and said, "You built me this beautiful home. It's more than I could ever imagine, more than I could ever want, more than I could ever desire, but you know I'm old and I can't get around like I once did. In fact, I live in just one room, yet I've got to clean the whole thing. I know your intentions were good, and I appreciate it, but it's more than I need."

She looked at the second son. She said, "I know that home theater is nice. I've had people come and tell me how incredible it is. But you know I'm blind, so I can't watch movies anymore, and so it's really a waste of money. I am sure it's nice and I know your intentions were in the right place, but I really don't need it. Thank you anyway."

She looked at the third son and said, "You heard what I told your brother. I'm blind. I can't drive anymore. I know that car's nice, because I've had the neighborhood kids come and tell me what an incredible car it is, and I know your intentions were in the right place, but I don't need that car."

Oh, but then she looked at the fourth son, the youngest son, and said, "Oh, but now you really thought it through. You really thought about what I could use and what I could need; something that would mean the world to me, something that I could really use, so I just want you to know that chicken was delicious, honey!"

Intentions in the right place, but never actually getting to what needs to be done. That's what so many of us as followers never do. We have the best of intentions, the best ideas, the best plans, and we want to do and we want to accomplish and we want to be and we want to do for God, but yet because of our lack of following through and carrying through with our plans and carrying through with what God wants for us and the desire that He places in our heart, we never really accomplish it.

Today we begin a brand-new sermon series that is going to go through the whole month of January, and it's entitled *Let's Take a Walk*. As we begin this road, as we begin this new year, as we begin to travel this road that God has laid out before us, we have to make the commitment that we are going to walk this road with God at our side, and today what I want to do is share with you a passage of Scripture that helps us to truly get a glimpse, a picture of what it means to walk with God.

I want you to turn in your Bibles with me to Luke 24. In Luke 24 we read the story of two men whose lives were changed forever, whose hearts were changed forever because they took a walk with Christ, and today as we begin this sermon series, as we begin and continue throughout this brand-new year of 2012, I want us all to read this passage, to understand what it tells us so that we can truly begin to live out what it means to walk with Christ.

It starts in Luke 24 verse 17, “And He [Jesus] said to them, “What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk?” Jesus walked up to these two men and said, “What are you talking about? What kind of conversation are you having as you’re walking along?” You’ve got to get the context of what’s going on here. Luke 24, if you look back a couple of chapters and verses you’ll note that this was after Christ was crucified. It’s after He died on the cross, after He was buried, and it’s even after He rose again.

This story takes place on resurrection day. Earlier that day, we will read in a few moments, is when the women went to the tomb and found it was empty. It’s when the disciples ran and looked inside and He was no longer there. It’s when the angels appeared and said, “He is not here, for He is risen.” It is after all of that had taken place, and now these two men are walking and Jesus shows up and says, “What is it that you are talking about?”

Let’s take a look at what happened in this story. If we go back a couple of verses to verse 13 it says, “Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.”

What had happened? The fact that Jesus was crucified, the fact that the one that they loved and honored, the one that they had worshiped, that He had died on the cross and suffered a horrible death and that He was placed in the tomb, and now on this resurrection day, now they are being told that He is risen. How can that be? What’s going on? You can imagine this was a topic of conversation all throughout Jerusalem, and certainly on that road to Emmaus.

It goes on in verse 15, “So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.” As these men were walking along, talking about what was happening, what was going on, the current events of the day as they had opened the *Jerusalem Times* and read the newspaper that morning and heard what the women had reported, all of a sudden Jesus shows up and starts to walk with them.

Now it says in this passage that their eyes were closed, “their eyes were restrained,” so they could not see and could not understand. They did not know that the person that was walking with them was the Son of God, the one they were talking about. But what we begin to see in this passage, and it’s what I want to share with you today, is how when we take a walk with Christ, it changes everything. It’s a journey that changes everything in our lives.

I want to share with you four quick thoughts from this passage. First, understanding we need to take this journey by reading the Word of God, studying the Word of God. When we study the Word of God the way that He speaks to us and comes alongside of us, the first thing it does is help us understand what this life is all about.

Look what it says, verses 17 and following, “And He said to them, “What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?” Now that part “are sad” is an important part and we’ll come back to it in a few moments.”

“Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, ‘Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem?’” You can imagine what was happening here. These men are walking along, talking about what everybody is talking about, the fact that Jesus was crucified, and that He was buried and now they are saying that He rose again. So Jesus shows up and says, “What are you guys talking about?” The guy looks at Jesus and says, “Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?” And He said to them, What things?”

“So they said to Him, ‘The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.’”

We already read in verse 17 that these men are sad. They are upset. They are despondent. Their hearts are broken. And we know why. Here they are saying, “We were hoping that Jesus was the one. We were hoping that He would be the one to deliver us, that He would be our Messiah, that He would be the hope, that He would be the one that would give us freedom and give us forgiveness. We were hoping that He was the one.”

They go on to say here,

“Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain 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.”

Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

We understand here and we see here that when Jesus heard what they had to say and heard the concern of their hearts, that because they were now walking with Jesus, He began to explain it all to them, to explain everything that was going on, to explain to them about life. And don't we live in a world today where we need to understand what's going on? We look around us and see the situations that we face and challenges that we go through, we wonder, *Why in this world is this happening? Why is God allowing this to happen? Why is God allowing this to happen to me?* It's because so often, as Jesus pointed out in this passage, it's because we have forgotten what the Word of God says.

A lot of us live reactive lives in our relationship with Christ. You know the difference between proactive and reactive? Reactive is that we may be followers of Christ and we may walk with Him, we may be children of the king, but yet what we do is take Christ and our relationship with Him and set Him on a shelf until we need Him, until a challenge shows up, until our hearts are broken, until the problems are rearing their ugly heads in our lives, and then we run to the shelf

and we pull Him down to help us understand why it is we are going through what we are going through and what we need to do now.

Christ does not want us to live reactive lives. He wants us to live proactive lives. You know what that means? That means that Christ wants us to spend our time walking with Him every day, before the challenges show up, so that when they do, we already have the answers that Jesus wants us to have. It comes through His Word. Everything that He gives to us, His protection and the understanding life, because when we spend time in the Word of God and we understand life, the second thing it does for us is it helps us to truly, when we're studying the Word of God, to calm the stress, the fears and the problems of life, the storms that we are going through.

Look what it says in verse 25 in the New Living Translation, "Then Jesus said to them, 'You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures [in the Old Testament]. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?' Then Jesus began to quote passages to them from the writings of Moses and the prophets explaining what all the scriptures said about himself."

Jesus helped them to understand that everything that was in the Old Testament helped to understand what was going on now. The Word of God is our answer. I started in the beginning of this year reading through the whole Bible. My goal this year is to read through the Bible four times, so on my phone I have an app, a YouVersion app, and it's got a plan, the Bible in 90 days. So I started on January 1 to begin reading the Bible through four times this year. It started in Genesis. Man, what great stories in Genesis! It starts off with the garden and with Adam and Eve and creation and then you begin reading about Noah and Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph.

And then you go into Exodus, that incredible story. You go with Moses into Egypt and the deliverance that God brings, and all these incredible stories. And then you get to Leviticus. How many of you have read Leviticus? Do we really care about what to do with the entrails? Anybody? You see, what happens is a lot of people have a great plan to read through the Bible and they read the great stories of Genesis, the great stories of Exodus, and then they get to Leviticus and start reading about where to splash the blood and what kind of foods you can eat and things kind of fall by the wayside because we start asking the question: Is it really meaningful?

My friends, I want to tell you that every word that is in this book is meaningful. Every word that is in this book is used by God to reveal Himself to us. Things that literally will calm the storms. Jesus told them, "You are so foolish. You had the Word of God. You had all the answers. You had everything that I revealed to you through the Scriptures that would have told you exactly what is going on right now, but yet you are sad and upset and concerned because you were hoping that Jesus was the one, and had you just simply believed and understood and took a walk with me before, you would know there is nothing different, not reason to be afraid, no reason to be sad."

When we study the Word of God and take this walk with Him, it helps us to understand life. It helps us to truly get a picture of how He can calm the storms and calm the stress in our lives. But

it also helps to drive us to a deeper relationship with God. Look what it says here in verse 28, “By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, but they begged him, ‘Stay the night with us, since it is getting late.’” So He went home with them. As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!”

This passage tells us that as they were walking along and as the journey ended, as they arrived at the place they were going, they begged Christ, “Come with us. We want to continue talking with you.” They brought Him to their home and they sat down and had a meal together. In those days, that was a big deal. To break bread together was important. It proves to us and shows us that they desperately wanted to be in His presence and they wanted to continue hearing from Him. I am telling you today that if you spend time studying the Word of God, it will drive you, it will give you a passion and a desire to spend more time with Him.

George Mueller, who led orphanages in England back in the 1800s, was an incredible man. If you’ve ever read any of his writings or his biography, it’s an incredible story. He had this to say, “It is a common temptation of Satan to make us give up the reading of the Word and to give up prayer when our enjoyment of it is gone, as if it is of no use to read the Scriptures when we do not enjoy them, and as if it were no use to pray when we have no spirit for prayer. The truth is that in order to enjoy the Word of God, you ought to continue to read it, and the way to obtain a spirit of prayer is to continue praying. The less we read the Word of God, the less we desire to read it, and the less we pray, the less we desire to pray.”

When we put the Word of God on a shelf, when we stop talking to Him, pretty soon our desire to do it begins to go away. But listen: Far, far, far sadder is that our desire to walk with Christ and have a deep relationship begins to go away, and I’m afraid today that the majority of our churches, the majority of the people in our churches today, that’s where they are. That’s why my passion, my heart is for you to get into the Word of God. It changes everything. It changes you. It changes your desires, it changes your passion, it changes your heart, it changes what you do.

You’ve often heard that phrase that sin will either keep you from the Bible or the Bible will keep you from sin. That is true. It could not be more true. When you fill yourself up with the Word of God there is no way that Satan will be able to fill you up with what he wants to fill you up with. It will drive you to walk with Christ more.

Studying the Word of God drives us to a deeper relationship with Him. And lastly today I want to share a true statement from this passage. It says studying the Word of God will always lead you and make you want to share that story with others, to let others know about Him. Look what it says in verse 33, “So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, “The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.”

What happened here is that as soon as Jesus vanished, as soon as He revealed himself to them, as soon as they heard all that Jesus had to say, they couldn’t help themselves. They had to jump up

that very moment and run back to Jerusalem—seven miles, mind you—to tell everybody they possibly could about the risen Lord.

My friends, we talk often here about reaching this community with the Gospel of Christ, of changing our world by developing Christ-followers who love God and love people. The only way that it's going to happen is when God's people take a closer walk with Him and have a deeper relationship with Him and spend more time in His Word and it will drive you to share that truth.

I can stand up here all day long and tell you we want to reach our community. Charles can get up here all day long and lead us in worship. We can go to our classes all day long and study the Word of God together and talk about things and fellowship together. We can come to church seven days a week, but until you, in your heart, open this book with a desire and with a passion to get to know Him better and to get to walk with Him closer and begin to see and experience all that He has for you and begin to truly understand what it is that Christ wants to do for you in the midst of all the storms and stresses of life, until you do that, we will not change our world. We've got to open this book. It helps us to understand life, it calms the storms in life, it helps us to have a deeper relationship with Him, it drives us to tell others about Him.

This passage has one last statement that I want to share with you. It's pretty important. Verse 32 says, "And they said to one another," these two guys that walked along that road with Jesus that day, "did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

Dear friend, I'm telling you, walking with Christ when you're reading His Word, when you're listening to Him, He will reveal Himself to you in ways that you could never possibly imagine, and just as they say, your heart will burn within you with a passion for Christ, with the things of Christ, sharing Christ, living for Christ, walking with Christ, experiencing Christ. It will burn within you.

So today the question I have for you is this: Can you honestly say, "My heart is burning inside of me because of my relationship with Jesus Christ"? Or have you long ago taken the passion, the yearning, the desire that you had and set it on a shelf and you began walking that road all by yourself? There are a lot of people today that are walking the road alone, that are walking along just as those two on the road to Emmaus. They are walking along and they are sad and broken-hearted and yet Jesus is right there waiting to draw near, to reveal Himself to you and change everything. That's what Jesus wants to do for you. Would you bow your heads and close your eyes with me?

The Word of God was given to us for a very important reason, an important purpose. It's quite simple, really. It's because Jesus wants to do for you and for me what He did for those two on the road today. He wants to show up in our lives. He wants to walk with us every moment of the day. He wants us to hear from Him. He wants us to experience Him. He wants us to know and understand who He is so that we can say, "Isn't our heart burning inside of us because of our walk with Christ?" He wants to change everything today.

Whatever it is that God is speaking to you, I'm asking you, I'm begging you to allow Him to reveal Himself to you through His Word, through talking to Him, taking a walk with Jesus.

(Singing: "The Heart of Worship")

[Praying] God, we thank you that every step that we take on the road that we travel, whether it's on the mountaintop or in the valley, whether it's in the good times or the bad times, whether our hearts are overflowing with joy or filled with sorrow, that we know that we know that we know that you are with us and that we have nothing to fear. God, I pray for every person that is gathered today. Help us to walk out of this place walking with you, hearing from you, being changed by you, and in turn help us to change the world. Lord, for that we will give you the praise, we will give you the glory. In Jesus' name we pray.

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