Rock Bottom

# (Luke 24:13-16)

Good morning, I am so thankful to have all of you with me on the other side of computer screens, laptops, tablets, and phones everywhere. I am Pastor John and I thank you for being part of Christ’s Community Church online because you really are part of our extended family. And so, I want to thank you for taking an hour to stop and celebrate Jesus with us because we believe that Jesus Christ is the greatest news in world history. Last week we celebrated the fact that the stone is rolled away, the tomb is empty, and our Savior Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. But the reality for many of us today and for those first believers is that life is hard and even in the afterglow the resurrection there are just so many questions.

In fact, for many of us, we’re living at a time when life has seemed to have spiraled out of control, many of us are isolated, feeling abandoned, and struggling to find answers to questions we hoped we’d never have to ask. And so, today, I want you to know that when your circumstances are overwhelming, there’s a very practical promise in the resurrection, that the very real presence of Jesus, the promised Holy Spirit will help you and comfort you as you face the challenges of life. Just as real as the promise of the resurrection is Jesus promise that he would “give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth…” (John 14:16-17). And so, the Holy Spirit, called the Comforter, the Helper, and the Counselor will be with us forever. Just as Jesus said, I will never leave you nor forsake you, the Holy Spirit will be with you, he will lead you into all truth, comforting you and encouraging you. And so, this is an amazing promise attached to the resurrection because Jesus said,

*“It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you” (John 16:7).*

Jesus promised us something better, something more powerful, and yet there are many who are missing out on the hope and the joy that the Holy Spirit brings.

Much like the two unknown believers that we are going to meet walking down the road in Luke chapter 24, verse 13. The Bible says,

*“Now that same day (in other words, later resurrection Sunday) two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:13).*

We encounter these two disciples who we are going to discover, and this is the title of my message, who were at “Rock Bottom.” They are walking down this little road, just a path to an insignificant place, they are walking away from Jerusalem. These two unnamed travelers, spiritually were at rock bottom, they’re defeated and discouraged, walking away from the place where the presence of God was, where the Passover lamb had just been sacrificed, and where the promised Holy Spirit was to come in glory.

Everything they had hoped for was now nothing more than a memory. They turned their backs on the promise, they ignored the rumors of Jesus resurrection, and thinking it was all over; they are walking away and wondering where is God in all this? And maybe some of you are asking that same question, and so, I want to tackle that question today because the answer is amazing, and it is filled with such hope.

These two believers were walking away from Jerusalem, they are going the wrong way, spiritually they are at rock bottom, but the good news is that grace will always chase you down. You see, God was not done with them, they are just walking along, and in many ways, revelation is progressive, revelation increases with every step. And so, they are walking along, and verse 14 says,

*“They were talking with each other about everything that had happened” (Luke 24:14).*

And so, they are talking about their doubts and fears, their struggles, maybe the loss of income, the challenges of being home with nothing to do because now their teacher was gone. And so, as they walked along talking about the death of their dreams, how the Romans had crucified the very one whom they’d hoped was going to save them and right there into the middle of their discussion, verse 15 says,

*“As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him…” (Luke 24:15-16).*

As they are walking down the path with Jesus, they are kept from recognizing him, and I wonder how many times we have been kept from recognizing what God was doing right in front of us? You know, maybe you were in that place, you were at rock bottom, you were waiting for that perfect situation, but you missed seeing what God was doing because all you saw was the mess.

The thing that I love about this story is that God meets us at our worst, they had given up, they were at rock bottom. They were walking along focused on themselves, how they were discouraged and disappointed, when all that they needed was walking right there with them, but they were kept from recognizing him. I wonder if some of you have been kept from recognizing the presence of Jesus right in front of you, not just walking with you, but dwelling within you? You know, the apostle Paul said it this way,

*“Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us” (Romans 8:18).*

In other words, there is this progressive revelation in us, as we stay on the path, as we walk with Jesus, his glory will be revealed in us.

I’ve always found it to be interesting living so close to Gettysburg, because my wife Dana and I go there often to get away by ourselves, celebrating or just a date night, but it’s like it’s so close that we often miss the significance of it. You know, all the history and tourist attractions and we are just passing through, just shopping, or getting something to eat. It is there, it is so close, but we cannot even see it.

That reminds me of last summer when I was out at the pool and Jeremy asked me what the scar was on my stomach. Suddenly, what had been there for 30 years, became visible. It had been there all the time, but suddenly he noticed it. And my point is that things can be so close, so obvious that they remain unnoticed. Just because we do not see it, does not mean that it is not there. In fact, it has always been there, it is just been unnoticed.

Today, I believe that the Holy Spirit wants to reveal Jesus to you so that you see him, recognize him, and sense his presence like never before. You see, the Bible tells us that the Holy Spirit comes to testify about Jesus. He said in John chapter 15, verse 26,

*"When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me” (John 15:26).*

And so, the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, the Spirit of truth, will meet you wherever you are, whether you are at rock bottom, on the mountaintop, or anywhere in between; because he comes to testify about Jesus. I believe that the Holy Spirit is going to draw you to Jesus, he is going to make Jesus so real to you that he will become your passion and the reason why you live.

You see, there are a lot of things in the world that we could be passionate about. There are people who are passionate for sports, passion for music, even passionate about miracles or worship, but the primary purpose or passion of your life should be for the presence of Jesus Christ. If your passion is for anything else, you are missing the number one reason why you were created, because you were created to love him, to know him and spend time with him. In fact, I want to share with you the story of a young woman who often visited with Jesus and discovered the most important thing of all.

Like those two disciples on the road to Emmaus, I believe the Holy Spirit wants to teach us how to recognize and experience the presence of Jesus. No longer being kept in the dark, kept from recognizing Jesus, but instead that we would become passionate for his presence. You see, that was something Jesus took very seriously, and he was very clear about his priorities. Even though most of Jesus’ ministry was in Galilee, no less than three times a year he would walk close to 80 miles to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts. When he came to Jerusalem he would often stay at the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany, which was less than 2 miles from Jerusalem. The Bible tells us in Luke chapter 10, verse 38, that on one such trip,

*“Jesus and his disciples came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made…” (Luke 10:38-40).*

And so, Jesus is welcomed into this home, Martha is making sure that everything is exactly right for her guests; you know, she wanted to make sure that everything was clean, disinfected, and the food was perfect. But what happened was that her sister Mary was not doing anything, she was simply sitting at the feet of Jesus listening to him speak. And so, Martha began to get irritated and so she said,

*“Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!"*

Jesus answer to her is so profound and deep,

*"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her” (Luke 10:40-42).*

If there is one thing that we should learn today, it is that we should sit at the feet of Jesus and listen to him speak, because he says that is the only thing that is needed. And yet sadly, for many of us, the one thing that is needed, that is often the one thing that we do the least, but it is in that place where you will hear from God.

*You see, Jesus said in Matthew chapter 11,*

*"Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Matthew 11:28-29).*

And so, he is not going to yell at you, because he is gentle; he whispers when you are in his presence, as you are at his feet and listening the Bible says,

*“You will show me the path of life; in your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalms 16:11, NKJV).*

It’s only in his presence, that he will show you the path, the way to go, the decisions you need to make, and he reveals them to you as you sit at his feet. It is there in his presence that you will experience the fullness of joy, it is there that you will find true pleasure, not the momentary pleasures of this world, but true lasting pleasure. And it is as you sit there in his presence that the Bible promises,

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31, NKJV).*

And so, Jesus invites us to come when we are weary and burdened, when we are at rock bottom to wait in his presence, and he will renew our strength.

Jesus said, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things.” And honestly many of us are worried and troubled about so many things today. Our culture leads us to do more than we should be doing and our spiritual enemy lies and says you have to do this, take care of this, or fix this before you can sit at his feet; but Jesus says no,

*“Only one thing is needed” (Luke 10:42).*

Just one thing, one thing is needed, one thing is required, and that is for you to sit at his feet and listen to his voice. You see, at his feet not only will he show you the path of life, not only will he give you joy, not only will he strengthen you, but you will know him. The Bible says,

*"Be still and know that I am God…" (Psalms 46:10).*

In other words, you’ll know him personally not because you read about him, not because you heard about him, not because you’re a certain religion, but you’ll know him personally because you spend time with him, because you heard him speaking when you were at his feet.

And when you sit at his feet, his love, his joy, his peace, his righteousness, and holiness all begin to be transferred into you as you are infused with his power. That’s why it’s so important that we be still, that we sit at his feet, turning off the phone, turning off the notifications, turning off the television, because there are just so many things that will distract you from that one thing. There are so many things to distract you from his presence, but Jesus says to you, only one thing is needed. And that one thing according to Jesus is to sit at his feet and listen to him.

And so, we must remain in that place, remaining in this attitude of humbleness, if we want to remain in his presence. When we find ourselves at rock bottom, struggling with faith, struggling with our circumstances the Bible tells us:

*“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time” (1 Peter* *5:6).*

He will lift you up, but we find that Martha continues to serve, she did not listen, she did not receive his words, she continued to be busy with the things of life. And when Jesus returned to Bethany again in John chapter 12, it says in verse one,

*“Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume” (John 12:1-3).*

Now, this was probably the most difficult time in Jesus life because he knew that in six days he was going to be crucified. His closest friends didn’t get it, the disciples didn’t understand, nobody knew what was about to happen, but Jesus knew that in six days he would be handed over to the Gentiles, they would mock him, insult him, spit on him, flog him and kill him. He knew all of that was coming and so he chose to go to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus because he knew that there was someone there that loved him; someone who wanted to spend time in his presence, not because of the miracles, but because of who he was.

You see, Mary loved him and accepted him for who he was, she would run to him and fall at his feet even if she didn’t receive her miracle, even if her brother was four days in the grave. And in John chapter 12, as Martha continues to serve, Jesus is sitting there, and suddenly we see Mary come into the room.

Now, we cannot confuse this with the account given in Luke chapter 7, verse 36, where the sinful woman poured perfume on Jesus. This was not that woman, this was not in a Pharisee’s house in Galilee, this was Mary of Bethany, at the house of Lazarus whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

And so, Mary comes into the room, she does not care what the others think, but she goes straight to Jesus and falls at his feet. She worships him taking this unbelievably valuable perfume, not calculating how much, not just a little, but she pours it all on Jesus feet and she worships as it is written,

*"How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!" (Romans 10:15).*

Instantly the atmosphere changed in that room because of her sacrificial worship and the fragrance of the perfume filled the whole room.

You see, when you and I are willing to worship Jesus like that, falling at his feet, the atmosphere will change in your life and in your home, because worship attracts the presence of the Holy Spirit. Worship reveals the presence of the Holy Spirit in you and it spreads everywhere. The Bible tells us this in second Corinthians, chapter 2,

*“Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him” (2 Corinthians 2:14).*

I love that because when you are a worshiper, the fragrance of the knowledge of God spreads everywhere through you.

Those two disciples traveling down the road to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus, but as they spent time in his presence, listening to him speak, the Bible says as,

*“He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself” (Luke 24:27).*

As they are walking with him and listening to him, things began to change. Their hearts were burning within them, they were enjoying the presence of Jesus, they wanted the blessing to last, and so when they arrived at their destination, they urged him to come in and stay with them.

We are going to continue this story next week as we encounter the presence of Jesus in the breaking of bread. But Jesus opened the Scriptures to them, the fragrance of the knowledge of God, the presence and anointing of the Holy Spirit changed the atmosphere in their house, and they recognized him. We will continue here next week, but right now, in your room, in your house, as you begin to worship him, you will see a change in the atmosphere. God will meet you wherever you are, and where there is fear or anxiety, sickness or disease, suddenly you will have joy, you will have peace, you will see healing and transformation, because the atmosphere has changed.

Like those two disciples, you may have heard the story of Jesus before, but you cannot really see how it applies to you. As you spend time in his presence, he will give you eyes to see, but it’s not until you really seek him, humbling yourself at his feet and listening to him that you’ll experience true life change. As we listen to his words, our hearts will begin to burn with a passion for his presence and we will begin to engage with him like never before. We will see him in our weaknesses and failures, we will see where he strengthens us, where he builds us up, and where he is changing us to become more like himself. Even right now through the use of technology, we are spreading everywhere the fragrance of God, his word is getting out everywhere, there’s only one thing that matters, one thing is needed, and that is to spend time in his presence.

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