



Sermon from  
April 19, 2026  
Third Sunday of Easter  
Pastor Amy Vigesaa

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Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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When I was in high school, my mom prayed for me to have a good Christian friend. And then Natalie entered my life. Natalie is one of those people who lives with such a radiance about her, that it can only be understood as Christ within her. She shines with the light of Jesus. We became fast friends and spent a lot of time together. I remember, as we got a little older, and were driving more, we decided to drive into the cities and go for a walk around three of the lakes up there: Lake of the Isles, Lake Harriet, and what at the time was called Lake Calhoun- now rightfully called Bde Maka Ska. To walk the trail around all three lakes was 12-miles, but we were walkers and talkers, so it proved to be no problem for us. I don't even remember what we talked about, but I do remember how significant that walk felt. I have never done it since, but I talk about it almost every year. It is a walk that stuck with me.

Cleopas was walking with another disciple, maybe a friend, maybe a spouse- scripture doesn't tell us, but they were walking away from Jerusalem. They were

not part of the inner circle of 12, maybe part of the 72, or extended group of followers. For 7 miles they walked and talked about all that had happened. They talked about Jesus, about his death, about their hopes and longings. A stranger, someone they perceived to be a migrant or foreigner- an outsider certainly- came near to them and walked alongside listening and asking questions. After a while, it was his turn to talk, and he started to explain the old prophecies and unfold the mysteries of scripture. He reframed the events that happened so they could make sense of the last few days. Their hearts burned as he spoke. When he walked up ahead of them, they begged him to stay. It was a memorable walk, the kind that sticks with you. They didn't want it to end.

If you struggle with mobility issues, walking might be difficult to even think about. But understand, the walk is not always a literal, physical walk. Much of the time it is a metaphor for our life with Christ. For centuries, the Christian faith has often used the metaphor of a walk. We hear phrases like "your walk with Jesus," or "Walk the walk," or "your faith walk." I saw a t-shirt the other day that said, "Walking by faith, tripping constantly." And that's how it goes for us. We're not always good at walking with Jesus. Sometimes we stumble. Sometimes we trip and fall. Sometimes, we turn and walk down a different road. But there's something about this idea of walking. Research has proven there are benefits to walking. It boosts our mood, lowers stress, is good for our hearts, improves brain function, even helps us problem solve. I'm pretty sure this walk with Jesus did all those things for these two disciples. Whether you're a walker in body or spirit, the important thing to remember is who is walking with you. Even with all the benefits of walking, the greatest benefit comes in having Jesus

come alongside us in our walk. Scripture tells us that “Jesus himself came near and went with them.” Jesus himself came near. Isn’t that beautiful? Jesus walks with us- what good news that is. It is certainly good for our hearts when he does.

Yet often, like Cleopas and the other disciple, we don’t recognize Jesus. We don’t see that this stranger, migrant, foreigner, outsider speaking to us is Christ himself. The presence of Jesus often feels foreign to us; often seems strange and outside our known relationships and experiences. Sometimes Jesus shows up as a stranger or an outsider. Sometimes Jesus shows up in ways we don’t recognize or aren’t ready to see. Sometimes we don’t realize Jesus is there next to us in our friendships, in our walking companions. We don’t recognize through our grief, our trauma, or perhaps hopelessness that the risen Christ is right there beside us, talking to us, listening to our pain, trying to reframe things for us, opening up scripture to us. We are so often blinded, unable to see it is Jesus, unable to name the moment. Like the disciples, we can only look back on our experiences and say, “weren’t our hearts burning within us?”

I think I’ve mentioned before how I like to walk and pray. I got in the practice a long time ago of going for prayer walks and walking prayer labyrinths. Years ago, I had a path I walked. I started to call it my Simeon’s Walk after a monk named Simeon who allegedly wore a path around his monastery’s rooftop in a discipline of prayer. I took to walking my own route after reading a psalm each morning. I would talk to God while I walked. Well, I happened across my journal from that year of walking the Crackleberry Loop. It was filled with

scripture passages and reflections on faith and life and God and hope. It was a time of finding my pace with Christ. I look back at those walks with such longing for more of that kind of time, lingering with God in my heart and mind. Those walks stuck with me. Pastor Tyler Staton, founder of the 24/7 House of Prayer ministry, tells a story in his book *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*, of when he was in middle school and felt a calling to pray for his classmates. He began walking around the outside of his school building in the early mornings before school with a school directory in hand, praying for each student by name. Years later, he went home to visit and decided to go back to this well-worn path around his school. It, of course, wasn't the same. While that time was deliberate and driven by purpose, while it was so clearly marked by the work of God, he remembered another day when he walked through the park without any purpose but to be with Jesus simply because he wanted to and what a delight that walk was. Whether our walk with Jesus is literal or figurative, intentionally being with Jesus will make our hearts burn for his presence. We will want more. We will long for Jesus to stay a bit longer.

Walks take time though, and we are busy people. We walk for exercise. We walk our dogs. We walk with purpose. We would benefit from slowing our pace once in a while. A walking pace allows for conversation, unlike a run. We can typically walk for a longer time than we can run, unless you're a marathoner (Mary Croft). As we walk, Karoline Lewis reminds us that the resurrected Jesus is revealed little by little. Over time, as we walk with Jesus, we will come to know the Holy love of God more and more. We will learn the ways of Jesus and be discipled in the life he calls us to. Cleopas and his companion get one

moment with Christ revealed in the breaking of the bread and then he disappeared. That moment came after miles of walking and talking together. Maybe those miles represent the time needed to prepare our hearts for that moment of truly seeing the resurrected Christ; of having our eyes opened to the presence of God. We must be patient. Walks take time.

This walk to Emmaus shows us that Cleopas and his companion were stuck in sadness. They circled through the events of the past week, making no sense of what had happened. When we walk without Jesus, we process our experiences through our own knowledge and understanding; we think through things on our own and can so easily fall into grief and hopelessness. But when Jesus walks with us, things change. Our experiences, and our very lives, are transformed. We are invited to walk and talk with Jesus. To let that outside voice into the dialogue. To listen and learn from the one who walks with us, allowing our grief and circumstances to be reframed by Jesus. We are invited to allow Jesus into the ordinary moments of our lives- walks, conversations, and dinners. New Testament Professor Margaret Aymer tells us,

“Luke’s story reminds us that our relationship with the resurrected Christ is a relationship of long walks, risky conversations, reframed traumas, and quiet dinners—an intimate relationship between Christ and the church, of words shared and bread broken.”

Maybe today would be a good day to take a walk; to take it slowly and linger with the risen Christ. That would be good for us, good for our hearts. We might find at the end, we want more and beg Christ to stay a bit longer. That's the kind of walk that sticks with a person; that changes a person.

Alleluia. Amen.

*Welcoming in Christ. Growing in Faith. Responding in Love and Service.*