

3 Easter A SML 2017 LK 24:13-35

At 8:46 AM the plane hit the first tower. A few minutes later, one of my direct reports came into me and said, "Dan, a plane just hit the World Trade Center." A few minutes after 9:00, she came back and said the second tower was hit." I went downstairs to the cafeteria and watched the horror as it unfolded that fateful morning. It was a morning I said to myself, "I wish I was functioning as a priest today."

An hour later, my Dad called me at the office. He didn't start his conversation with, "Did you hear?" because he knew I had. His first words were, "Your brother just dropped off Susan and Gregory with your Mother and me because he is going up. So you had better get home and sit by the phone." What he meant by, "Your brother is going up" was my brother Rob, who is a pilot in the United States Air Force Reserves, was going up to secure the airspace over Philadelphia, the same brother whose 3 year old son was killed just six months prior, and was grounded because Rob was in no frame of mind to fly. And on September 11th, my brother was still in no frame of mind to fly. But during war time, if you are a pilot, you fly - PERIOD. This is crazy. This is unbelievable.

If my father had talked to me on Easter Sunday afternoon, in the year 33 AD, he wouldn't have started his conversation with, "Did you hear?" because he knew I had. By the time it was Easter Sunday afternoon, there was no one in Jerusalem who had not heard what had happened.

Everyone in Jerusalem was talking about the death of Jesus Christ:

- Did you feel that earthquake on Friday? Did you know it was at the same moment that Jesus of Nazareth died?
- I was in the Temple and that heavy curtain that separates the Ark of Covenant from us ripped right town the middle like a piece of newspaper. And I heard it ripped at the exact same moment that Jesus of Nazareth died.
- I was in the cemetery on Friday afternoon and right at 3:00, the exact same time Jesus of Nazareth died, every tomb busted open. Couldn't believe it. I threw up from the smell of it.
- It gets better. This morning, some of our women went to the tomb to anoint the body and they saw angels who said Jesus was alive. The angels were talking to them. So some of my buddies went to the tomb and said the same thing. Angels were talking with them. This is crazy. This is unbelievable.

So when Jesus walked up to his two disciples and asked them what they were talking about . . . “What are we talking about? What is everybody talking about? Are you the only one in Jerusalem that doesn’t know what’s going on? On September 12th, were you the only one in the entire country who did not know we were at war?” On November 23rd, 1963, were you the only one in this country who didn’t know Kennedy had been assassinated? That is how absurd Jesus’ question was. And these two disciples were at the end of their rope because they were walking the wrong way. And we all know, that when you walk the wrong way, there’s nothing but problems.

If you take a good look at Luke's gospel as a whole, notice that the entire gospel is knitted together by Jesus' traveling, by Jesus on a journey from Galilee to Jerusalem:

LK 9:51: As the time approached when he was to be taken from this world, he firmly resolved to proceed toward Jerusalem . . .

LK 13:22: Jesus went through cities and towns teaching, all the while making his way toward Jerusalem . . .

LK 13:31: For all that, I must proceed on course today, tomorrow and the day after toward Jerusalem . . .

LK 18:31: Taking the twelve aside, Jesus said to them: "We must now go up to Jerusalem so that all that was written by the prophets may be accomplished . . .

LK 19:28: Having spoken thus, Jesus went ahead with his ascent to Jerusalem . . .

Since Luke places so much emphasis on going to Jerusalem, making his way toward Jerusalem, ascending to Jerusalem, the fact that the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus were making their way down a road away from Jerusalem says they were walking the wrong way. And when you walk the wrong way, there's nothing but problems.

Learn a lesson about walking the wrong way, whether it's you or someone you know: no ultimatums, no co-dependent behavior, no strong arming . . . the best way to approach someone walking the wrong way is to draw them out and allow them to heal themselves.

1. Our Lord did not say, "I know what you need. I know what your problem is." Rather, his technique was to draw them out. If the disciples' hearts would have a tongue and speak, Jesus would have an ear and listen.
2. Jesus identified the problem: Their plan vs. God's plan. Their plan did not mesh with God's plan. Their plan was to

have a Redeemer before He was crucified; God's plan was to provide a Redeemer crucified.

3. Jesus gave them a good, honest, objective "I understand it this way." "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted to them what referred to him in all the Scriptures."
 - a. He showed them all the Jewish types and all the Jewish rituals and all the Jewish ceremonies that were fulfilled in Him;
 - b. He quoted the prophet Isaiah and showed them that HE was Emmanuel, or God with us;
 - c. He quoted the prophet Micah, and how HE would be born in Bethlehem;
 - d. He quoted Moses and showed how he would be a serpent that would be lifted up to heal men of evil, and how his side would be the smitten rock from which would come the waters of baptism
 - e. He quoted from Isaiah again, and showed them the manner of his death and crucifixion, and his last words from the Cross.
 - f. He quoted everything from the entire Old Testament that related to him.
4. And finally, Jesus did not wear out his welcome. "He gave them the impression he was going farther." He stated his

case and let them decide: no ultimatums, no co-dependent behavior, no strong arming.

Do you know someone walking the wrong way? Are you walking the wrong way? Spending a little too much time at the water cooler with Mrs. Murphy? Making a little too much profit off the unsuspecting customer? Four points, then from today's gospel:

1. Talk about it, not with someone who will tell you what you want to hear, but with someone you respect, someone who's got their act together.
2. Identify the problem: where you're walking (Emmaus) vs. where you should be walking (Jerusalem)
3. Then listen to a good honest, objective "I understand it this way." And
4. Don't wear out your welcome. The case has been stated. Now decide.

Because when you walk the wrong way, there'd nothing but problems. So for the two disciples walking the wrong way, there'd be nothing but problems in Emmaus.