*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

April 5 - 10

The Road to Emmaus

**Monday, April 5 Luke 5:1-11**

*“They left everything and followed Jesus”*

The story begins with the crowds pressing around Jesus eager to hear the good news. Noticing two boats by the Lake, he gets into Simon’s boat and asks him to shove off a bit. Then he sits down to preach. Finishing his sermon, Jesus says to Peter, “Let’s go fishing.” Peter’s reaction to this suggestion is interesting. When Jesus wants to use Peter’s boat for a pulpit, that is no problem. When Jesus wants to use Peter’s boat for fishing, Peter protests. Jesus knows about preaching but Peter knows about fishing.

Do we ever feel that way – that Jesus knows about spiritual things, the Kingdom of Heaven, God, prayer, but when it comes to practical affairs such as running our business or managing our home, that’s where we’re the expert? Peter was skeptical about Jesus’ helpfulness on a fishing trip, but he agreed to give it a try, and off they went. The results were astounding – one of the biggest fish stories of all time. Peter may have been intrigued by Jesus’ teaching, but Jesus’ fishing miracle was enough for him to leave everything and follow Jesus.

*As your disciple, Lord, I realize that you know what is best in every situation. Amen.*

**Tuesday, April 6 Luke 5:27-32**

*“Levi got up, left everything, and followed him”*

We should have a special appreciation for Levi, who became Matthew, because he paid such a high price to follow Jesus. The fishermen who became disciples were middle-class businessmen. If this new venture ended in failure they could always go back to fishing. Levi/Matthew was a wealthy tax collector, and you couldn’t give up tax collecting for the Romans on a whim and expect to ever return. He cut his ties. He gave up his wealth and privilege and position and did so gladly to follow Jesus.

He was so elated about this decision he wanted to celebrate. He threw a great party and invited all his tax-collector friends. He had found something of great value, and he wanted to share it with his friends and colleagues. The scribes and the Pharisees were upset because table fellowship meant full acceptance. Only friends ate together, and Jesus was demonstrating that these were his friends. Jesus taught that there are no good and bad people – only those who know they’re bad and those who don’t.

*Those who follow you, Lord, know they are forgiven sinners. Amen.*

**Wednesday, April 7 Luke 6:12-19**

*“He chose twelve of them to be apostles”*

Jesus decides to organize his followers. At the top of this organized group of disciples stand these twelve men. They are a diverse group made up of fishermen, tax collectors, a staunchly political person, and a few others whose identities are left undeveloped. His selection of the twelve is preparation for the mission to come, as well as an anticipation of his future departure after his death and resurrection. All but Judas Iscariot will come to have a central role in the development of the early church.

The setting of Jesus’ selection is no accident. He spends the entire previous night in prayer. Thus his selection is set in a context of communion with God. This is the only place in the New Testament where an all-night prayer vigil is noted. Jesus selects twelve men. The number is designed to suggest a parallel to Israel’s twelve tribes which track their ancestry back to the twelve sons of Jacob. Luke calls the group “apostles” as he lists their names. That title indicates their role as commissioned representatives of Jesus on behalf of the kingdom message.

*Like these first messengers, Lord, you ask me to share your kingdom message. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONAL*

April 5 - 10

The Road to Emmaus

**Thursday, April 8 Luke 6:20-26**

*“Jesus turned to his disciples and said”*

The Sermon on the Plain is Luke’s equivalent to Matthew’s Sermon on the Mount. The sermon begins with a call that echoes the prophets of the Old Testament – an invitation to blessing and a warning against woe. The first part declares God’s grace of blessing to those who identify with him. In contrast, the woes show God’s unhappiness with those who oppose the blessing Jesus gives and who persecute his disciples as a result. God commits himself to his disciples in the present age and will bless them richly in the future.

The four descriptions of the righteous in verses 20-22 should not be seen as separate groups, but as elements of one portrait describing those for whom God has compassion. The blessings of God’s promised rule belong to such as these: the pious poor, those who hunger, the sad, and the persecuted. The four woes match and contrast the four blessings, revealing Jesus’ displeasure with people who are uncaring about those around them. As with the blessings, the four descriptions are not four distinct groups but four related descriptions of one kind of person.

*As your disciple, Lord, I will care for those in need as you do. Amen.*

**Friday, April 9 Luke 8:22-25**

*“Who is this man?”*

The Sea of Galilee is located some seven hundred feet below sea level and has hills surrounding it. The eastern side has a particularly steep set of hills. It is not unusual for a cold wind to shoot through the gaps and collide with warm air over the lake in a dangerous weather pattern. As Jesus rests, such a weather cycle occurs. Before the disciples have time to react, a whirlwind emerges, and they find themselves at risk in the boat. Waves sweep over the edge and threaten to capsize them.

Sensing the danger, the disciples cry out to Jesus of their pending doom. Can he do anything? Jesus turns and rebukes the wind, and immediately there is calm. Then he asks them a crucial question, “Where is your faith?” Do they not trust God to see them and care for their best interest? In an event beyond their control, do they not believe that God is in control? The disciples react with fear and amazement. “Who is this?” The disciples are beginning to appreciate just how unique Jesus is.

*I am confident, Lord, that you are always aware and watching out for me. Amen.*

**Saturday, April 10 Luke 24:13-35**

*“Two of Jesus’ disciples were walking to Emmaus”*

The encounter between Jesus and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus is one of the most vivid resurrection appearances of Jesus. The account is unique to Luke and contains key elements of the Gospel: the importance of the promises of the Word of God, the status of Jesus as prophet, and his role as messiah. The passage also contains the sharing of a meal with Jesus in which Jesus discloses who he is to the two disciples. As with all the resurrection accounts, this one reassures us that Jesus has risen and is alive.

John Wesley had his own Emmaus Road experience through hearing the promise of God’s Word. Here’s how he described it: “I went very unwillingly to a meeting where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Romans. While he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation.” The speaker was reading a commentary on Romans. Yet Jesus was there. Scripture points to the one who is with us on our Emmaus Road.

*Reveal yourself to me, Lord, as I read and meditate on Scripture. Amen.*