

**Children's Moment** *Getting Lost*

Good morning, boys and girls.

Have you ever gotten lost? I have. Did you know Moms, Dads, grandpas and grandmas and other family members get lost? Even pets get lost. We see posters for lost cats and dogs all the time.

How do you get lost? One thing I can tell you is no one starts out saying, "I'm going to go get lost." That's not the way it goes.

What happens is this: We set out on a trip with a destination in mind. We may have looked at a map or used an app on our phone to help us before we start, but we head out. But something changes. Maybe we miss a turn. Or traffic is bad and we have to take a different road, one we don't know. If we're traveling at night, we can be confused because we don't see the mountains and landmarks we use during the day.

When that happens, we lose track of what we expected to do, where we thought we'd go and what we'd see along the way. We see things we don't expect. Our trip starts to take longer. We may even find ourselves going in circles, seeing the same things over and over again.

What do you feel when you're lost?

I get confused. I doubt myself. I worry about things that could happen. I'm not sure which way to go to get help or even where I am. It's scary.

The best thing to do when you're lost is to stop, take a deep breath and pray. Ask Jesus to help you. If you're in a car, pull over. Look around and see where you are and what's happening. Let your heart and mind slow down so you can focus. I encourage you to reach out for help.

If you're lost in a store or at the mall, find a security officer and ask for help. If you're lost outside, you can go to a nearby house and ask for help. If you have a phone, you can call someone to help. If you're really, really lost, you can even call 911 and they can help.

The best person to ask for help is Jesus. He'll come and be with you, helping out in ways you may not realize. But, when you find your way home, you'll know Jesus was with you all along, taking care of you.

*Let's pray ...*

**Message: “What Path Are You On?”**

**What kind of journey are you on?** No one’s life remains the same, day in and day out. Your life is dynamic. Even on the most boring day, who you are at the end of the day isn’t the same as who you were at the beginning of the day. We’re all constantly changing. Our body, mind, will and spirit change and not necessarily in the same way.

For example, you could be growing spiritually, even as your body is slowly and surely failing. Some of our seasoned folks live this experience. On the flip side, you could be growing physically and mentally, yet declining spiritually. Some people, particularly the young, often go through periods where their spiritual life and faith are challenged, even as they’re growing in other ways. I know these are general descriptions. The reality is everyone one of you is changing uniquely every day. We’re all on different journeys through life.

**I reflected on the nature of our journey and found a few common paths we take.** The first is ...

- **Necessity.** Our need for safety and security lead us to take specific actions, according to our personality, appetite for risk, status and experience.
- **Discovery.** We’re curious beings. We want to learn more about ourselves, other people and the world we live in. This opens our eyes to opportunities and gives us joy.
- **Health & Wellness.** We’re self-aware. We have physical, mental and emotional states. When we’re living into our capabilities, we feel better and we’re more confident.
- **Vocation.** Whatever we do, we want to feel like we add and receive value in some measure. Whether your career is within the home or outside of it doesn’t matter. Our worth is tied to our sense of accomplishment; just existing isn’t enough for most of us.
- **Spirituality.** We feel the need to go deeper, asking “why” questions. What’s the meaning of life, our purpose? What’s beyond life as we know it?

**I believe you're juggling all of these aspects of life.** It's like looking through a kaleidoscope. One moment you look and see your needs first, another moment your wellness or your curiosity dominates. Your vocation is regular focus. Much less often, you see spirituality in focus.

**Have you ever thought about how much time you spend connecting to God?** Let's do a little exercise. I'm doing this to raise awareness, not make you feel badly. Think about your time this week ...

How many hours did you spend in worship? \_\_\_ hours

How much time did you spend in prayer? \_\_\_ x7/60 = \_\_\_ hours

How much time ... reading/studying Bible? \_\_\_ x7/60 = \_\_\_ hours

How much time ... serving others? \_\_\_ x7/60 = \_\_\_ hours

How much time ... sharing your faith? \_\_\_ x7/60 = \_\_\_ hours

How much time ... \_\_\_\_\_ (you choose)? \_\_\_ x7/60 = \_\_\_ hours

Now, add all that time up. How many hours for the week? \_\_\_ hours

Divide that number by 168: \_\_\_ hours/168 hours/week \*100 = \_\_\_%

**What percent of your time are you spending on your spiritual life?**

Example: 1 hour in worship. 15 minutes of prayer per day. 15 minutes of Bible reading/study on weekdays. 0.5 hour of service. 0.5 hour of other. Total time: 4 hours/week. Percent of your time: 2%

**It's not unusual to discover you're spending only 1% of your time thinking about your "Why?"** Sadly, we're all in good company.

I believe, with all my heart and mind, your struggles will only become better when you spend more time on your relationship with Jesus. You need to make your spiritual life more of a priority. The problem is, most of us are distracted, bored, unaware, unwilling, in denial or just not sure which way to go for that to happen. We can spend a lot of time talking about Jesus without being in a relationship with Jesus.

**That's was the situation Cleopas and his friend found themselves in.**

We read the narrative known as the walk to Emmaus earlier. Two of Jesus' followers, not part of the twelve, had had enough! They were headed home after a bad week. Jesus entered Jerusalem like a king, a week ago. Three days ago, he was crucified on a cross on the very day of Passover. They couldn't travel on the sabbath, so they waited until the next day and then headed down the hill to the village of Emmaus.

**What started you on your journey to where you are now?** We all have some initial impetus. It could be a crisis, boredom or a struggle with a lack of capacity. Maybe your life goals - your desire to “leave a mark,” started you on your path. For some of you, a lack of passion or energy for life is what moved you. You want life to have meaning and purpose. The point is, whether you realize it or not, you’re on a path. Going through life without thinking about where you’re going is like driving a car without holding on to the steering wheel.

**Looking back at scripture (Luke 24:19-35), we see the two friends were in a deep conversation** as they walked the 7+ miles to Emmaus. They were talking about what happened as they traveled. That’s when a third traveler joined them, someone they didn’t recognize.

**The traveler asks a simple question,**

*“What are you talking about so intently?”* (v17)

**This startles them.** They stop with sad faces. The two friends are shocked. There’s only one road from Jerusalem to Emmaus, so the traveler had to have come from Jerusalem.

**Cleopas asks, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who’s doesn’t know what’s happened over the last few days?”** (v18). They’re finding it hard to believe anyone in the city wouldn’t know what happened. Crucifying a rabbi on Passover is a terrible thing. Most people were in town for the annual gathering, so how could this person not know?

**This raises an interesting question, “Who are you traveling with?”** Few of us travel through life isolated and unaware. We have family – our parents, siblings, grandparents, spouse, partner, children and other dependents. You’ve all had teachers, coaches and instructors. We have mentors, counselors and peers. Some of you’ve sought out spiritual advisors.

**Thinking about who you’re traveling with raises the question, “What are you talking to each other about?”** Going back to our paths, we often find ourselves talking about our needs, interests, health or work. We rarely talk about our spiritual life with other people. I think that’s a mistake on our part. Our scripture lesson supports that.

**The traveler asks, “What has happened?”** (v19, MSG)

**The two friends promptly proceed to “fill in the blanks.”** They tell the traveler about Jesus, where he came from and what he did. They tell the traveler about his betrayal, sentencing and crucifixion. They share their hope: we thought he was the Messiah, the one to free Israel! They remember the prophecy of the third day, but admit they’re confused. Mary and the women were at the tomb but couldn’t find Jesus’ body. The women are telling this crazy story about angels who say Jesus is alive. Some of their friends went to the tomb to check and found it empty, just as the women said. But there’s no sign of Jesus (vv19-24).

**Wow, what a story!** The first time you hear it, it blows your hair back. You want to know more. Angels? Jesus missing? Tell me more! I don’t know about you, but that’s what I’d be saying.

**But that’s not what this mysterious traveler says.** Frankly, he gets a bit rude. The traveler says, *“You’re foolish. Your dull minds are misleading your heart. Don’t you believe? Don’t you see that what happened was necessary for the Messiah to enter into his glory?”* (vv25-26). For Christ to come into power, fully and completely, what happened was necessary. They were told this three times in advance.

**That’s when one of my favorite parts of the Bible happens.**

The traveler (yes, it’s Jesus), interprets all of the Hebrew scriptures - the Old Testament, for them. He starts with Moses and goes through all the prophets, showing them everything written about ... himself.

**What would you give to have Jesus teach your next Bible study in person?** Cleopas and his friend are soaking it up. One thing to ask, “If Jesus is teaching about himself, why don’t they recognize him?”

**The narrative shifts a bit at this point.** The three travelers arrive in the village of Emmaus. Jesus acts like his destination is another place. It’s getting late in the day, so the two extend hospitality to Jesus, offering a place to stay, a meal and comfort. Jesus goes in with them.

**Where are you going?** Going back to the different paths – necessity, discovery, wellness, vocation and spirituality, is helpful. If your path is dictated by necessity, your end goal is to obtain or acquire. If your path is discovery, your goal is to learn. Wellness leads to who we become,

physical and mentally. Vocation leads to achieving. Only spirituality leads to who we are, our being.

**People will offer you hospitality on your journey through life.**

That's what means to be part of a household and part of a community. The groups you're part of will change over time. We may stay with one group or in one place for a period in our life, then find ourselves traveling to another place later.

**What we don't realize is Jesus is traveling with us.** Jesus isn't physically present. He's present spiritually. When we're in the presence of people who follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit in them communes with our spirit. Jesus said, "*Where two or more are gathered in my name, I'm there with them*" (Matthew 18:20). That's a promise we can hold onto.

**All too often, we're like Cleopas and his friend.** We don't recognize Jesus, even when it's really obvious. We don't look for God's presence. God is present in every moment, the good ones and the bad ones. We're looking through the kaleidoscope for everything but God.

**I believe that's why we lose our way.** We get lost. We're focusing on everything but what matters most: God with us. We're overwhelmed by our needs, our fears. We struggle to accept things we don't know or realize, our faults. We have physical, mental and emotional distractions, our hurt feelings. We face barriers we don't know how to overcome, like being taken for granted. Without turning to Jesus, we become insensitive to spiritual things. We struggle with a sense of meaninglessness.

**There's good news: your journey isn't done!** Jesus is with you. All you have to do is look for him, believe and your life will change.

**That's what happened to Cleopas and his friend.** Jesus went to a home with them. He sat down at the table. When Cleopas passed him the bread first, as the guest, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them. Then Jesus disappeared! (v30). Jesus re-enacted the last supper with them, our sacrament of communion. God's grace touched them and their eyes were opened. They recognized Jesus!

**How has Jesus been revealed to you on your journey?** An “Ah, ha” moment occurs for all of us when it comes to faith. Even if you’re a lifelong believer, at some point you realize you really, truly believe Jesus is your Savior. When we truly see Jesus for who and what he is, our lives change. We begin to understand our spiritual nature. We want him to fill more than 1% of our lives.

**Jesus wants your life to be better in every way.** Jesus wants you to know he loves you and cares for you. Jesus will show you things you can’t imagine. Jesus will help you to overcome your fears, faults and hurt feelings. Jesus gives you meaningful work to do at all ages. Jesus awakens your soul to a lifegiving way of living.

**The only question we’re left with is, “How will you respond?”** Cleopas and his friend show us the way. They shared with each other, “*Didn’t we feel on fire as he talked with us on the road, as he opened up the Scriptures for us?*” (v32, MSG). They were filled with a passion for living real life. They had to share their experience.

**Do you know what they did?** Even though it was getting late in the day, they ran seven miles back to Jerusalem (uphill!) to tell the others. They found their friends. Excited, they said, “*It’s really happened! The Master has been raised!*” (v34). They told the whole story, including how they didn’t recognize Jesus until he broke the bread.

**Do you know what happened next?** Jesus appears among them and says, “*Peace be with you.*” The walk to Emmaus happened during the day on the first Easter Sunday. All of these supernatural happenings changed their lives. They change our lives today and will transform lives in the future.

**How will you respond?** Believe. You’ll find passion, your heart burning. You’ll be aware, there’s more going on than meets the eye. You’ll feel connected to God and others, past, present and future. You’ll be in a relationship. Jesus comes to each of us on our journey, waiting for the right moment to reveal himself, when you will awaken. You’ll want to tell others. You won’t wait to share your experience with friends, family and people you meet.

**Look for Jesus in every moment of your life journey. You’ll be glad.**

*Let us pray ...*

### **Reflection & Prayer**

“O Christ, born of God before all ages, you took upon yourself our humanity and you rose for us: we worship you.

Source of life, we invoke your goodness upon us and upon the entire human family.

Son of God, allow us to live by your life and walk as children of light in the joy of Easter.

Increase the faith of your Church; may it faithfully bear witness to your resurrection.

Comfort all who are burdened and engrave in their hearts your words of eternal life.

Strengthen those who are weak in faith and reveal yourself to doubting hearts.

Give strength to the sick, support the elderly and reassure the dying by your saving presence.

Risen Christ, through the Gospel your voice makes itself heard softly. You tell us: ‘Why worry? Only one thing is necessary, a heart attentive to my words and to the Holy Spirit.’”<sup>1</sup>

In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.taize.fr/en\\_article5806.html?id\\_document=5831](https://www.taize.fr/en_article5806.html?id_document=5831)

**Psalm 116:1–4, 12–19 (CEB)**

I love the Lord because he hears  
my requests for mercy.

I'll call out to him as long as I live,  
because he listens closely to me.

Death's ropes bound me;  
the distress of the grave found me -  
I came face-to-face with trouble and grief.

So I called on the Lord's name:  
"Lord, please save me!"

What can I give back to the Lord  
for all the good things he has done for me?

I'll lift up the cup of salvation.  
I'll call on the Lord's name.

I'll keep the promises I made to the Lord  
in the presence of all God's people.

The death of the Lord's faithful  
is a costly loss in his eyes.

Oh yes, Lord, I am definitely your servant!  
I am your servant and the son of your female servant -  
you've freed me from my chains.

So I'll offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving to you,  
and I'll call on the Lord's name.

I'll keep the promises I made to the Lord  
in the presence of all God's people,  
in the courtyards of the Lord's house,  
which is in the center of Jerusalem.

**Luke 24:13-35 (MSG)**

That same day two of them were walking to the village Emmaus, about seven miles out of Jerusalem. They were deep in conversation, going over all these things that had happened. In the middle of their talk and questions, Jesus came up and walked along with them. But they were not able to recognize who he was.

He asked, “What’s this you’re discussing so intently as you walk along?”

They just stood there, long-faced, like they had lost their best friend. Then one of them, his name was Cleopas, said, “Are you the only one in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard what’s happened during the last few days?”

He said, “What has happened?”

They said, “The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene. He was a man of God, a prophet, dynamic in work and word, blessed by both God and all the people. Then our high priests and leaders betrayed him, got him sentenced to death, and crucified him. And we had our hopes up that he was the One, the One about to deliver Israel. And it is now the third day since it happened. But now some of our women have completely confused us. Early this morning they were at the tomb and couldn’t find his body. They came back with the story that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Some of our friends went off to the tomb to check and found it empty just as the women said, but they didn’t see Jesus.”

Then he said to them, “So thick-headed! So slow-hearted! Why can’t you simply believe all that the prophets said? Don’t you see that these things had to happen, that the Messiah had to suffer and only then enter into his glory?” Then he started at the beginning, with the Books of Moses, and went on through all the Prophets, pointing out everything in the Scriptures that referred to him.

They came to the edge of the village where they were headed. He acted as if he were going on but they pressed him: “Stay and have supper with us. It’s nearly evening; the day is done.” So he went in with them. And here is what happened: He sat down at the table with them. Taking the

bread, he blessed and broke and gave it to them. At that moment, open-eyed, wide-eyed, they recognized him. And then he disappeared.

Back and forth they talked. “Didn’t we feel on fire as he conversed with us on the road, as he opened up the Scriptures for us?”

They didn’t waste a minute. They were up and on their way back to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and their friends gathered together, talking away: “It’s really happened! The Master has been raised up—Simon saw him!”

Then the two went over everything that happened on the road and how they recognized him when he broke the bread.

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