



St Barnabas Cray

Encountering Jesus on the Emmaus Road

Weekly Devotional Journey

Monday - When Jesus Walks Alongside Us Unrecognised

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognising him. (Luke 24:15-16 NIV)

Devotional Thought

How often do we journey through our days unaware that the risen Christ walks beside us? The two disciples on the Emmaus road were so consumed by their grief and disappointment that they couldn't see what was right before them. Their eyes were veiled not by divine cruelty, but perhaps by the very intensity of their sorrow. This speaks profoundly to our human condition. When we're overwhelmed by circumstances—whether loss, worry, or simply the grinding routine of daily life—we can become spiritually myopic, unable to perceive Christ's presence in our ordinary moments. Yet the beautiful truth of this passage is that Jesus chose to meet these disciples exactly where they were. He didn't wait for them to come to the temple or to compose themselves spiritually. He met them on a dusty road, in their confusion and pain, walking at their pace, listening

to their concerns. This is the nature of our Saviour—He comes to us in our mess, not after we've sorted ourselves out. The question isn't whether Jesus is present in our daily journey, but whether we have eyes to see Him. Sometimes we recognise His presence only in retrospect, realising later that He carried us through difficulties we thought we faced alone.

Reflection Question

Looking back over recent weeks, where might Jesus have been walking alongside you without your awareness at the time?

From Sunday's Sermon

"How often might we not be aware of Jesus walking alongside us? We don't see Jesus, but we do know, if we think about it, we know that he is there."

Today's Application

Today, cultivate awareness of Christ's presence through simple practices. Set three gentle reminders on your phone to pause and acknowledge that Jesus walks with you—perhaps at morning coffee, lunch, and evening. During these moments, don't feel pressured to pray elaborate prayers; simply acknowledge His presence with a phrase like 'Jesus, I know you're here with me.' As you move through conversations, work tasks, or household duties, occasionally ask yourself: 'How might Christ be present in this moment?' Look for His presence in unexpected places—a colleague's kindness, a moment of beauty, even in difficulties that develop your character. Keep a small notebook to jot down moments where you sense God's presence, however faintly. This practice of attentiveness will gradually train your spiritual eyes to recognise the One who never leaves your side.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the times I've walked through my days as though I were alone. Open my eyes to see you in the ordinary moments, the difficult conversations, and the quiet spaces of this day. Help me to be as aware of your presence as I am of my own breathing. When disappointment or worry clouds my vision, remind me that you are there, listening, caring, and guiding my steps. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Reviewing the Day with Our Unseen Companion

Evening Reflection

As evening settles, we have the gift of looking back over the day with new eyes. Like the disciples who later exclaimed, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road?' we can often recognise Christ's presence more clearly in retrospect. Perhaps that difficult conversation at work was an opportunity for grace you didn't fully appreciate at the time. Maybe the frustration you felt was actually Jesus inviting you to trust Him more deeply. The beauty of the Emmaus story is that Jesus was fully present in what felt like an ordinary journey—no miracles, no dramatic revelations, just patient companionship and gentle teaching. Our days are filled with such 'ordinary' moments where the extraordinary love of Christ is quietly at work. Tonight, resist the urge to focus only on what went wrong or what you failed to notice. Instead, ask the Holy Spirit to show you where Jesus was present, even in small ways.

Evening Reflection

As you review today, where do you now sense that your heart was 'burning within you' as Jesus drew near?

Evening Prayer

Gracious Jesus, thank you for walking with me through this day, even when I was too distracted to notice. Help me to rest in the assurance of your constant presence. As I sleep, continue your gentle work in my heart. Amen.

Tuesday - Jesus Meets Us Right Where We Are

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them. (Luke 24:15 NIV)

Devotional Thought

There's something beautifully radical about how Jesus initiates this encounter. He doesn't wait for the disciples to seek Him out, to visit a holy place, or to get their spiritual act together. He simply joins their conversation, enters their confusion, and meets them in the midst of their honest struggle. This reveals something profound about the character of our Saviour—He is not distant or demanding, but approachable and accepting. Notice that Jesus doesn't immediately correct their theology or rebuke their doubt. Instead, He asks questions, He listens, He shows genuine interest in their perspective. This is pastoral care at its finest—meeting people where they are, not where we think they should be. How different this is from our tendency to put on spiritual masks or wait until we feel 'worthy' to approach God. Jesus demonstrates that no emotional state, no level of confusion or disappointment, disqualifies us from His presence. Whether we're walking through grief, wrestling with doubt, or simply trying to make sense of life's complexities, Christ draws near. He's not intimidated by our questions or put off by our struggles. In fact, it's often in these very places of vulnerability that we're most open to His voice and most ready to receive His comfort.

Reflection Question

What honest struggles or confusions have you been hesitant to bring before Jesus, thinking you need to 'sort yourself out' first?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Jesus chose to meet those two disciples on the walk to Emmaus. He didn't have to. He chose. He didn't meet them in any special place... He met them right where they were and totally accepted them as they were."

Today's Application

Today, practice bringing your unfiltered thoughts and feelings to Jesus. Instead of waiting until you have a 'proper' prayer or until your emotions are more 'spiritual', talk to Him about what's actually on your mind right now. Are you worried about a relationship? Frustrated with a work situation? Confused about a decision? Jesus isn't looking for polished prayers—He wants authentic relationship. Try the practice one person mentioned in the sermon: talk to Jesus throughout the day about everything, even saying, 'I might be boring you a bit now, but...' and continue sharing. Set aside the notion that some thoughts or concerns are too mundane for God. He cares about everything that concerns you, from the significant to the seemingly trivial. Write down one area of your life where you've been trying to 'manage' things on your own, and consciously invite Jesus into that space today.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you that you don't wait for me to have everything figured out before you draw near. Help me to be as honest with you as those disciples were on the road—sharing my disappointments, my confusion, and my questions without fear of judgment. Meet me right where I am today, in this moment, with all my imperfections and uncertainties. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Accepted As We Are

Evening Reflection

Tonight, let the truth sink deeply into your heart: Jesus accepts you exactly as you are, right now. Not as you hope to become, not as you think you should be, but as you are in this moment—with your struggles, your questions, your imperfections, and your weariness. The disciples on the road were disappointed, confused, and had misunderstood much of what Jesus had taught them. Yet He walked with them patiently, without condemnation. This is the heart of the gospel—while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. While we are yet struggling, He walks with us. You don't need to earn His presence through spiritual performance or wait until you feel more worthy. His love isn't based on your spiritual temperature or your ability to understand everything correctly. Rest in this acceptance tonight. Let it wash over any shame, any sense of spiritual inadequacy, any feeling that

you're not 'Christian enough' for Jesus to want to spend time with you.

Evening Reflection

How does knowing that Jesus accepts you exactly as you are change the way you want to approach tomorrow?

Evening Prayer

Jesus, thank you for accepting me completely, just as I am tonight. Help me to rest in your unconditional love rather than striving to earn what you've already freely given. Amen.

Wednesday - When Scripture Makes Our Hearts Burn

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

They asked each other, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?' (Luke 24:32 NIV)

Devotional Thought

What an extraordinary experience—to have Jesus Himself explain the Scriptures! Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He showed them how everything pointed to His death and resurrection.

Yet notice that the disciples only recognised this heart-burning sensation in retrospect. While it was happening, they were simply engaged in conversation with a fellow traveller who seemed remarkably knowledgeable about Scripture. This teaches us something vital about how God speaks to us through His Word. Sometimes the most profound spiritual encounters don't announce themselves with dramatic fanfare. Instead, they come disguised as ordinary moments of reading, studying, or discussing Scripture, where something inside us responds with recognition and warmth. The 'burning heart' isn't necessarily an emotional high, but rather the Spirit's witness that we're encountering truth that resonates with our deepest spiritual needs. When we approach Scripture not merely as an academic exercise but as a living conversation with the risen Christ, we open ourselves to these moments of illumination. The same Jesus who walked with those disciples longs to 'open the Scriptures' to us, helping us see how every page ultimately points to His love, His sacrifice, and His victory over death. Scripture becomes not just information about God, but transformation through God.

Reflection Question

When have you experienced your heart 'burning within you' as you've engaged with Scripture or spiritual truth?

From Sunday's Sermon

"They were taught the lessons of the Scriptures by Jesus himself, which were told by Luke had made their hearts burn within them."

Today's Application

Approach Scripture today with fresh expectation that the risen Christ wants to speak to you personally through His Word. Choose a passage—perhaps continuing in Luke 24 or selecting a Psalm—and read it slowly, asking Jesus to be your teacher just as He was for those disciples. Don't rush to analyse or apply; first, simply listen. After reading, sit quietly and ask: 'Jesus, what do you want me to see here? How does this point to you?' Pay attention to phrases or verses that seem to 'glow' or create a sense of recognition within you. Keep a journal nearby to record not just what you read, but how your heart responds. If you're in a Bible study or discussion group, listen for moments

when conversation about Scripture creates that sense of 'burning' recognition. Remember, the goal isn't to have dramatic spiritual experiences, but to cultivate attentiveness to how Christ speaks through His Word in both quiet and profound ways.

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are the Word made flesh, and in Scripture you continue to speak. Open my heart to recognise your voice as you teach me through the pages of your Word. Help me to read not just with my mind but with my spirit, expecting to encounter you personally in the text. When my heart burns with recognition of your truth, help me to treasure those moments and respond in obedience. Amen.

Evening Devotion

Treasuring the Word in Our Hearts

Evening Reflection

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is described as someone who 'treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.' Tonight, we can follow her example with whatever ways Christ has spoken to us through His Word today. Perhaps a verse lingered in your mind, or a truth settled into your heart with particular weight. These are gifts to be treasured, not quickly forgotten in the rush of daily life. The disciples' hearts burned as Jesus opened the Scriptures to them, but they had to choose to pay attention to that inner warmth, to recognise it as something significant. In our information-saturated age, we can easily consume spiritual truth without digesting it, read Scripture without letting it read us. But when we take time to ponder, to let God's Word settle into the deeper places of our hearts, transformation begins. Even if today's encounter with Scripture felt ordinary, trust that the Spirit is at work in ways you may not immediately recognise.

Evening Reflection

What word, phrase, or truth from Scripture is settling most deeply into your heart as this day ends?

Evening Prayer

Lord, thank you for speaking to me through your Word today. Help me to treasure what you've shown me and to carry it with me into tomorrow. Continue to work in my heart through your truth, even as I sleep. Amen.

Thursday - Sharing Our Burdens and Finding Hope

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

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

Devotional Thought

The old adage reminds us that 'a problem shared is a problem halved,' and we see this truth beautifully illustrated in the Emmaus story. These two disciples weren't suffering in isolation; they were walking together, talking through their disappointment and confusion. Their conversation was honest—they spoke of dashed hopes, of leaders who had failed them, of a future that seemed uncertain. Yet in their sharing, they found not just comfort but preparation for encounter with the risen Christ. This teaches us something crucial about Christian community and the healing power of honest conversation. We weren't designed to carry our burdens alone, yet so often we suffer in silence, thinking our struggles are too mundane, too spiritual, or too overwhelming to share. We worry about being judged, about burdening others, or about appearing to lack faith. But notice that Jesus didn't rebuke these disciples for their honest conversation about disappointment—instead, He joined it. When we share our burdens with trusted friends, family members, or fellow believers, we create space for Christ to enter our circumstances in new ways. Sometimes He speaks through the wisdom of a friend, sometimes through the comfort of simply being heard and understood. The goal isn't to find people who will simply tell us what we want to hear, but to find companions who will walk with us toward truth and hope.

Reflection Question

What burden have you been carrying alone that might be lightened through honest conversation with a trusted friend or fellow believer?

From Sunday's Sermon

"A problem shared is a problem halved. I think it's true, and I think it's generally true that talking about a worry, a loss, a disappointment, tends to help us."

Today's Application

Today, resist the temptation to suffer in isolation. Identify one person in your life—a friend, family member, pastor, or fellow believer—with whom you can share honestly about a current struggle or concern. This doesn't mean complaining or seeking someone to simply validate your perspective, but rather finding a companion for your journey toward hope and truth. Before you share, pray for wisdom about what to share and with whom. Then approach the conversation with openness, asking not just for sympathy but for perspective and prayer. If you're on the receiving end of someone else's burden today, listen with the same patient attention that Jesus showed the Emmaus disciples. Don't rush to fix or advise; sometimes the greatest gift is simply walking alongside someone in their confusion or pain. Remember that in Christian community, we have the privilege of being Christ's presence to one another.

Morning Prayer

Father, thank you for the gift of community and the healing that comes through honest sharing. Help me to be vulnerable enough to share my burdens and wise enough to carry others' burdens with love. Show me today how to be both a good companion and a wise counsellor, always pointing toward the hope we have in Christ. Amen.

Evening Devotion

The Gift of Shared Journey

Evening Reflection

As you reflect on this day, consider how God has used both the sharing and receiving of burdens to shape your heart. Perhaps you found courage to be honest about a struggle, or maybe you had the privilege of listening to someone else's story. Either way, you've participated in the beautiful mystery of Christian community—the way Christ uses ordinary conversations between ordinary people to bring extraordinary comfort and hope. The disciples on the Emmaus road didn't yet know they were walking with Jesus, but their willingness to share their story with a stranger opened the door for the most significant encounter of their lives. When we're honest about our struggles and open to the perspectives of others, we create space for Christ to meet us in unexpected ways. Tonight, give thanks not only for those who have walked alongside you in difficult seasons, but also for the opportunity to be a companion to others on their journey.

Evening Reflection

How has God used community—either giving or receiving support—to encourage your faith today?

Evening Prayer

Lord, thank you for the gift of companions on this journey of faith. Bless those who have shared their burdens with me and those who have helped carry mine. Continue to use our ordinary conversations to bring your extraordinary hope. Amen.

Friday - Jesus Waits for Our Invitation

Morning Devotion

Today's Verse

But they urged him strongly, 'Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them.

(Luke 24:29 NIV)

Devotional Thought

Here we encounter one of the most tender aspects of Christ's character—He waits to be invited. Even after walking seven miles with these disciples, even after their hearts had burned within them as He taught, Jesus acted as though He would continue on His journey. He didn't force His way into their home or demand hospitality. Instead, He waited for an invitation, for them to express genuine

desire for His continued presence. This reveals something profound about how God relates to us. As one preacher noted, 'Jesus comes by invitation.' He doesn't bulldoze His way into our lives, override our will, or force intimacy upon us. Instead, He draws near, demonstrates His love, reveals His truth, and then waits to see how we'll respond. This divine restraint isn't indifference—it's respect for the dignity He's given us as free moral agents. Yet how easily we can miss these moments of invitation! Jesus may have been walking with us all day through circumstances, through Scripture, through the words of others, but the question remains: will we invite Him to stay? Will we move beyond casual acquaintance to genuine intimacy? The disciples' urgent plea—'Stay with us'—reveals hearts that had been prepared through their journey together. They'd experienced something in His presence that they didn't want to lose.

Reflection Question

In what areas of your life is Jesus waiting for a more intentional invitation from you?

From Sunday's Sermon

"Jesus will wait to be asked into our lives. And when we can open our hearts and minds and make room for him, he will join us in everything that we do."

Today's Application

Today, move beyond assuming Jesus is welcome in your life to actively inviting Him into specific areas. Consider your work, your relationships, your recreation, your worries, your dreams—where have you been operating as though you're on your own? Choose one specific area and consciously invite Christ's presence and guidance there. This might mean praying before a difficult conversation, asking for wisdom in a decision, or simply acknowledging His presence during routine tasks. Create a simple daily rhythm of invitation—perhaps each morning saying, 'Jesus, I invite you into every part of this day,' and each evening reflecting on where you sensed His presence most clearly. Remember, this isn't about perfect spiritual performance but about genuine relationship. Just as the disciples urged Jesus to stay with simple, heartfelt words, your invitations can be equally straightforward: 'Jesus, I need you here,' or 'Lord, please don't let me face this alone.'

Morning Prayer

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the times I've assumed your presence without actually inviting you in. Today I want to be intentional—I invite you into every conversation, every decision, every moment of joy and every moment of concern. Don't let me journey alone when you're waiting to be welcomed. Help me to recognise the moments when you're drawing near, and give me the wisdom to say, 'Stay with us.' Amen.

Evening Devotion

Room at the Table

Evening Reflection

The story reaches its climax around a simple meal. When Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, suddenly the disciples' eyes were opened and they recognised Him. Then He vanished from their sight, but the impact of that moment sent them racing back to Jerusalem in the dark to share the incredible news. This evening, consider what it means to make room for Jesus at your table—not just the physical table where you eat, but the table of your daily life where decisions are made, relationships are nurtured, and priorities are set. The disciples didn't just invite Jesus to stay; they welcomed Him to take the place of honour, to break bread as the host. Sometimes our deepest encounters with Christ come not in dramatic spiritual experiences but in the ordinary moments when we make space for Him in our everyday routines. As this week of reflection concludes, the question isn't whether Jesus wants to be present in your life—He's already walking alongside you. The question is whether you'll continue to invite Him in, to make room for Him at the table of your heart, and to allow Him to transform ordinary moments into encounters with the divine.

Evening Reflection

As you look toward tomorrow and the days ahead, how will you continue to make room for Jesus at the table of your daily life?

Evening Prayer

Jesus, thank you for this week of walking with you more intentionally. As I prepare for rest, I invite you to continue your work in my heart. Help me to wake tomorrow with the same eagerness as those disciples who ran to share their joy. Make my life a place where you are always welcome. Amen.