

Seeing Things God's Way

Sermon Theme: Let God show us his way.

Text: Luke 24:13–35

Other Readings: Acts 2:14a, 36–41; Psalm 116:1–14; 1 Peter 1:17–25

Goal: That listeners trust more firmly that God is taking them his wise and gracious way, even in times of worry or doubt, because God showed how wise and faithful was his way of saving us by Jesus' cross and resurrection.

Sermon Outline

Introduction:

What would you expect on the road to Emmaus? Jerusalem is The City on The Hill. Heading out of Jerusalem, we descend into the valley below. Emmaus is at the intersection of two roads, a major north-south route (I17) and a regional east-west route (Hwy 69). We have walked at a steady pace, we have arrived at Emmaus about mealtime.

Interesting to envision, isn't it? The way two followers of Jesus may have walked that first Easter afternoon. Sounds like a pleasant stroll. Truth is, we don't know the way they walked. So much of the landscape has changed in two thousand years; towns, including Emmaus, have crumbled to dust. Today we can only guess at the road they may have taken.

Doesn't matter. Those two first-century disciples knew their way. Problem was, they didn't know God's way. That was a problem, just as it often is for us. So, let's

Let God Show Us His Way.

God always has and always will know *the* way to redeem us and to use us.

I. Let God show us the way he's worked in our past.

Where's God Going with This?

Seminarians, had a saying about their training: "You never know where you're going till you've been there." Next month, seminarians in Fort Wayne and St. Louis, very near the end of their training, will learn at call services where they're going to be serving God in their first parishes. Such an exciting event—call service! Families sit in the pews of the seminary chapels with their smart phones. And when the placement director calls your name and says Deer Lodge, Montana, you go scrambling for all the information you can glean. "Say where?!" Even when you've been told where you're going, you're not always sure. **Relate Our Story of arrival in CV**

Sometimes, we miss seeing where God's going even after he's told us. That was true of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus on Easter afternoon (Lk 24:13–35). Jesus had told them where he was going—just as God had told his people throughout the Old Testament. The Christ was going to the cross to suffer and die, but then would rise on the third day. Well, it was the third day, and women had told the disciples they'd seen Jesus, but the disciples still didn't know where God was headed.

- A. The Emmaus disciples hadn't seen which way God was going (vv 13–24).
 - 1. They were going the wrong way. Easter was happening in Jerusalem, but they were leaving the city despondent.
 - 2. They had just witnessed the death of Jesus.
 - a. They didn't know where to go, what to think, what to do.

- b. They knew how to get to Emmaus, but in a sense, they'd lost their way.
- 3. Now Jesus joined them on their way, though they didn't recognize him.
 - a. No problem with their eyes; Jesus miraculously kept them from knowing him.
 - b. The problem was they didn't understand God's purpose; they didn't see which way God was going.
 - c. Therefore, they didn't trust that God's way was working. They saw the recent events of Jesus' crucifixion as defeat.
- B. We sometimes miss seeing where God has taken us too, don't we?
 - 1. It's so easy to focus on the negatives in life.
 - a. We dwell on something critical or unkind someone said to us way back in the past.
 - b. We see TV commercials and think about all the things we don't have.
 - c. We're surrounded by sinful people—even our own spouses and families—and what we see most is their faults.
 - 2. We focus on negatives in our church's life.
 - a. We remember the financial problems.
 - b. We tell ourselves we're too small to do much as a congregation.
 - c. We become anxious when sin leads to conflict in the church.
 - 3. We dwell on these negatives because we forget God's purpose for us—God's way.
 - a. Our self-image is threatened by things others say because we're so insecure about our purpose or value in God's plan.
 - b. We're preoccupied with the things of this world we don't have because we forget this world isn't our real home.
 - c. We focus on faults because we forget we're called to be the salt of the earth where, of course, everyone is sinful.
 - d. We get stuck on negatives here at church because we treat it like a business and forget the gates of hell will not overcome it.

Transition: When we fall into that kind of thinking, and things don't always work out according to our plans, we may think God's going the wrong way, or that he's lost his way. He certainly hasn't.

- C. God's always been going the right way—his way (vv 25–27).
 - 1. Jesus showed these disciples God's way.
 - a. He explained to them the Old Testament Scriptures. (The Scriptures are always God's way of showing us his way!)
 - b. Jesus showed that the whole Bible points to or from his death and resurrection, that his suffering and death were God's way of salvation for us, not defeat at all. It all added up to glory.
 - 2. Jesus' death was God's way—his only way—to cleanse us of our sin.
 - a. Because the Christ suffered, our sins are forgiven.
 - b. God has the cleared way for eternal life.

Transition: God used the death of Jesus, that seeming setback, as his way of saving us. And whether we've realized it or not

- D. God has been guiding our way too . . . his way.
 - 1. God's people have ups and downs, but never really setbacks.

- a. The real ups aren't emotional highs, but days of trust even amid sin and tragedy.
 - b. The downs are never God losing his way, but rather God's way of strengthening us.
2. All the negatives are just sidetracks we see—or think we see—on the road to heaven.

Transition: That is where God's been taking us. So let's

II. Let God show us his way for our future.

The Emmaus disciples' progress from ignorance toward enlightenment is heightened by Luke's travel motif. Jesus spoke to them and opened up the Scriptures for them "as he was speaking ... in the way" This is Jesus teaching and interpreting the scriptures, still their eyes weren't opened yet. Remember the lengthy instruction, of Jesus to his disciples *on the road* to Jerusalem (9:51–19:28). At the start of that journey too, the disciples had no comprehension of Jesus' impending passion and resurrection (9:22, 44–45). What caused the hearts of the Emmaus disciples to burn was that Jesus was *speaking* to them on the road and *opening up* the Scriptures for them. In this conversation on the road, the topic was the passion and resurrection facts.

A dramatic change has come over the disciples. The mystery of the things that have happened has been revealed by the risen Lord. But the disciples recall that during Jesus' conversation with them on the road, even though the Lord spoke to them and opened up the Scriptures to them, they still did not have opened eyes (24:32). The instruction on the road—the explanation—*by itself* did not enable them to recognize the presence of the risen Lord. The instruction in the Word was a necessary precondition for recognizing Jesus, but Luke demonstrates in his conclusion that the Word is to be combined with the breaking of the bread (24:35, where "in the way," occurs again). The teaching alone was not sufficient but was complemented with the meal. Nor would the meal alone be enough. The meal must be received with knowledge of the prior teaching, which furnishes the proper understanding of the passion and resurrection facts according to the Scriptures.

- A. Christ got the disciples turned around the right way, God's way (vv 28–35).
 1. Christ opened their eyes; they recognized him!
 2. More important, they realized what God's way was all about (v 32).
 - a. "Sure enough, it's just as he said!"
 - b. "God *has* been in control—this suffering, this death, we're all part of his plan!"
 3. They turned back to Jerusalem, ran all the way—seven miles!—filled with joy, couldn't wait to tell!
- B. God's way for our future is the same.
 1. To continue to tell with joy that Jesus is alive, to explain that Scripture has been fulfilled in Christ, our Savior, to open eyes so that all who believe may have life!
 2. The seven miles the disciples ran to Jerusalem isn't a bad objective. Imagine the lives we could change within a seven-mile radius of (*440 W. Palomino Rd*).

Conclusion: That's God way. That much we know, because God's way was to redeem all people by Jesus' death and victorious resurrection, and God's way is to use us to spread that news. God has shown us his way, and that means we know where we're going, even while we're still on the way.