

His Story in You (Incarnation)

Luke 24:13-35

#3 (of 3) in our mini series "Reading Your Bible"

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April 24, 2016

Prayer

Lord God, we thank you for *you*. You are Love! In Jesus' name we ask that you would help us to preach. Amen.

Message

In 1990, I had the incredible privilege of traveling to Eastern Europe as the Iron Curtain was falling. Before we entered Romania, we got rid of all Christian literature. I buried some books in a bag in the dirt in Hungary. Some of my friends had been involved in smuggling Bibles across the border, but on this trip we were just smuggling our intentions *and* ourselves.

Within a mile of the border we had to guard our conversations due to the Romanian high-tech listening devices. At the border, guards with machine guns inspected our vehicle. They weren't concerned about drugs or firearms. They wanted to know if we had Bibles. At that time, in Romania, the Bible had been outlawed for forty-five years.

The Bible is the most popular and most illegal book in the entire world. It's certainly the most banned – Perhaps, even in this country. It's controversial to even discuss the Bible as literature in public schools, even though it's easily the most influential book in the history of the world. In some places you can still lose your life for possessing a Bible.¹

So why was the Romanian government so threatened by the Bible?

Maybe because it's true?

You have to guard lies in ways you don't have to guard truth.

You have to guard the lies from the truth—and the Bible is true.

There is incredible historical and textual evidence for the veracity of the Bible: We have thousands of ancient manuscripts. Several fragments of New Testament documents date back to the 2nd century. One appears to be from the 1st —just decades after Jesus died. We have copies of Old Testament documents dating back to a few hundred years before Christ.

DU professor, Allison Schofield, is on our church board—which makes her world renowned—but she's also a world-renowned scholar for her work on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some of those scrolls date back to 300 BCE.

The historical and textual evidence for the veracity of Scripture is far greater than that of any other ancient literature in the entire world.

¹ Yet, on my shelf at home are The Book of Mormon, The Bhagavad Gita, Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind and The Quran, and no one's worried about it.

There is also *incredible* archeological evidence for the veracity of Scripture. My archeology professor at the University of Colorado, Boyous Ayad Ayad Girgis Paul Hanna, used to always say on the first day of class: “Students, all that stuff in the Bible, it’s true!”

I also believe that the Bible has a remarkable internal consistency . . . but it’s not a mechanical consistency. For instance, each account of Christ’s words at communion is a little different, and yet they all harmonize in meaning. Scripture is true, but Scripture is absolutely *NOT* what you’d expect, if someone were just making stuff up to start a religion.

It’s truth spoken through many people and several languages, over thousands of years. Scripture is true! Yet, the manual to your microwave oven is also true. And the Romanian government didn’t seem to be worried about that. Maybe that’s what scared the Romanian government.

Maybe they were worried because it’s powerful! Charles Spurgeon once said, “The way you defend the Bible is the way you defend a lion. You just let it loose.” You know, the Quran has changed the world, but if you study history you know that it’s changed the world, to a great extent, at the edge of *a sword*. And if you criticize the Quran, in some Moslem countries, you’ll meet the sword. The Quran is defended with a sword.

Even more than the Quran, the Bible has changed the world, but if you study history, you know that it’s changed the world *least*, whenever and wherever, it’s been accompanied by a sword.

It’s stupid to defend the Bible with a sword. It’s more like the Bible *is* the sword.

Whenever and wherever it has been introduced with a metal sword, as in the crusades, it seems to have no power. But smuggled into a country like China, where it’s illegal, no sword can stop it.

When missionaries were kicked out of China in 1949, there were an estimated 3 million Christians left in that country. Today the number is estimated at over 100 million, more than the entire membership of the Chinese Communist Party.

So the Bible is true, and the Bible is powerful, but not always powerful. I mean, yours may be sitting on your shelf, collecting dust, demonstrating very little power—just ink on paper.²

So what’s the key to unlocking its power?
And why would the Romanian Government be so concerned about Bibles?

² Yours may have little power like most of the Bibles in the United States of America. In America: where there’s plenty of Religion, but very little of what the Bible would define as power—real power.

This is our third week in a little mini-series on reading the Bible. Two weeks ago, we began by reading Hebrews 4:12: *“The Word of God is living and active (effective, powerful), sharper than any two edged sword.”* We saw that The Word is Jesus, yet Jesus referred to Scripture as the Word . . . or at least seemed to say that the Word was in Scripture.

When the Pharisees twisted Scripture, Jesus said, *“With your commentary you make void the Word of God.”* Pharisees preferred dead words on a page, which they could manipulate, to the Living Word standing in their presence. Yet some words on some pages can come to Life.

Jesus referred to the Word as a seed—it looks dead, but contains a kingdom. Kind of like Jesus would look dead, but the body and blood would contain an entire new creation.

Two weeks ago, the sermon was titled “The Letter,” and we noted that the Bible is a love letter. God is Love. His Word is the Word of Love. And we are the beloved. Love letters are powerful and cut to the division of soul and spirit; they discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.



Last week, the sermon was titled “The Story.” We talked about the fact that the Bible is a stack of love letters that comprise a story, and the story reveals a person, and that person is the plot. In the Bible, and in all creation, Jesus is the plot. Because the Bible is a Love story, and you are the beloved, you also become the plot.

When we lose ourselves in the story, we find the story in us, and we become the story. In other words, by Faith through Grace, the Word of God becomes flesh in us. And I think that’s what the Romanian Government was so afraid of: The Incarnation of the Word.

So, *“What does that look like?”* you say.

It looks like Luke 24:13-35

(Last week I was aiming for this text and this week we’ll read it)

Luke 24: 13

That very day³ two of them⁴ were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, (We also know Bethlehem was right outside of Jerusalem, but they were going to Emmaus) and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

“Kept from recognizing (from seeing) him.” It’s as if their blindness had a purpose . . . perhaps your blindness has a purpose?

And he said to them, “What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?”

*Literally, “What are these logoi you throw against each other?”
. . . asks Jesus, the Logos.*

And they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” And he said to them, “What things?”

Does Jesus not know the answer to this question?

And they said to him, “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.” And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart...

“slow” bradus—meaning: stupid, dull or slow—like a stone

to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.

³ *“That very day”* is the Sunday, after the Friday, on which Jesus was crucified.

⁴ *“Them”* are two disciples, but not two of the twelve, just two unknown disciples—could be you or me.

Maybe the Living Word is the key to unlocking the power of the written word?

And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He acted as if he were going further,...

Wow! He pretended, in order to cover up what He intended, that they would intend what He had *always* intended.

Jesus is like putting the moves on Cleopas and his friend.

He acted as if he were going father, but they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And he vanished from their sight.

Here's a really important question: Where did He go?
He's already ascended to His Father and He'll soon say, "*Lo I am with you always.*"

They said to each other, "Did not our hearts ("heart" is singular) burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread.

I began last week's sermon with the story of a little boy in WWII. He lost his family and his home in the Luftwaff bombing. Leslie Weatherhead found him and asked him who he was. He replied, "I ain't nobody, nothin'."

He'd lost his story.

Well, the two men in our Bible passage feel like "nobody, nothin'." They just watched their story get destroyed on a cross. But in a few paragraphs, they go from "nobody, nothin'," that can't make sense of Scripture, to "somebody, somethin'," that is Scripture—literally Scripture. Wow!⁵

So, how does it happen?

I'll make 12 points, but there are many more points.

⁵ At the beginning of their walk they're utterly confused about Scripture. At the end of their walk, they are Scripture—literally, they are Scripture—and they change the World. They didn't apply the Word to their lives, so much as The Word applied them to his own life... His eternal Life. And He makes all things new.

*How His Story becomes your story
and your story becomes His-Story.*

**How His Story becomes your story
and your story becomes His-Story**

1. It happens while walking

1. It happens while walking.

It didn't happen in a seminary, Bible school or church building. People take knowledge of the good, in order to apply the good to their own lives. That's human religion and we know *that* story. But in this story, Jesus, who is the Good, applies people to His own life. That's the Body of Christ.

**How His Story becomes your story
and your story becomes His-Story**

1. It happens while walking
2. It happens while talking,

2. It happens while walking and talking.

It didn't happen in a church building, *but* it did happen in church. The Church is two or three people gathered in His name... Gathered in His name and walking—living life together. He said He'd be there in their midst.

It didn't happen in a church building, seminary or Bible school. It happened while talking and walking:

- *Don't leave Scripture* in school or at church or on a night stand by your bed. It takes on meaning, or the meaning takes on you, when you take it walking.
- *And yet* if you never study, never memorize, never read in the first place, you cannot take it walking at all.

So I hope you set aside some time to study it, read it, and remember it, *so that* you can take it walking.

A rabbi was asked a question by a student, in regard to Deuteronomy 6:6

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart.”

“Why is it said this way?” the student asked. “Why are we NOT told to place the words *IN* our heart?” The rabbi answered that it is not within man’s power to place the divine words directly in his heart. “All that we can do is place them on the surface of the heart so that when the heart breaks they will drop in.”

The hearts of those two disciples were broken, and Jesus Himself—The Promised Seed—dropped the Word of God into the most fertile soil. The most fertile soil is a broken heart.

**How His Story becomes your story
and your story becomes His-Story**

1. It happens while walking
2. It happens while talking,
3. In a place of great disappointment.

SO...

3. It often happens in a place of great disappointment—the place where your dreams die, where you “lose your life”— the story that *you* have written.

Think about these two:

- They say, *“We had hoped He was the one to redeem Israel.”*
- They had hoped that Jesus would establish the geo political nation-state of Israel and drive out the Romans.
- They had hoped for cabinet posts in Jesus’ new government, nice families in good houses with 2.5 children with good grades and strong teeth.
- They hoped that Jesus would help them write their *own* stories.
- They had hoped that Jesus would make their dreams come true.
But, they had just watched as all their dreams were nailed to a tree.

Well, you and I know that their dreams were not too large, but too small.

If you’re a follower of Jesus and your dreams die, it’s not because they were too big, but too small . . . not that they were too great, but too little.

- *“You must lose your life to find it.”*
- You must lose your little dreams to receive His dreams.
- You must surrender the story you’re writing to become the story that He has written from the foundation of the world.

They thought they’d be “somebody, somethin’.” But now they were “nobody, nothin’.” And they wondered if Jesus was “nobody, nothing’,” just a nice thought, just a word—just idea or maybe a seed.

Well, Jesus doesn’t only redeem the little nation-state of Israel. Jesus redeems an entire creation, but it begins with a Seed—planted in the soil of a broken heart. And the Word can break a hard heart. And He’ll break it.

Listen to Jeremiah 23: “Is not my word like a fire, declares the Lord? And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?” We have stone hearts and Jesus, the Living Word, will crack them open to plant Himself—the Eternal Seed.

So . . .

**How His Story becomes your story
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1. It happens while walking
2. It happens while talking,
3. In a place of great disappointment.
4. It often begins as a problem,

4. It often begins as a problem.

These two disciples are on their way to Emmaus. No one knows exactly where Emmaus is, but we do know that the word means warm bath or hot springs. So, I have a theory that *what* these two disciples were seeking, that sad Sunday, was a “spa day.”

They’d been through the most traumatic event of their lives—all their dreams had been crucified, and now they just wanted to get away from Jerusalem, and all that pain . . . and just soak in a hot bath. That was the plan—the new plan—Jerusalem, but Emmaus. But now, they’re interrupted by this rude stranger, asking all sorts of painful questions.

C.S. Lewis writes,

The great thing, if one can, is to stop regarding all the unpleasant things as interruptions of one's own or real life. The truth is of course that what one calls the interruptions are precisely one's real life—the life God is sending one day by day.

Cleopas and his friend are literally interrupted by Life.
Jesus is the Life—their own life.

Remember how Jacob was interrupted in Genesis 32? He was travelling to Palestine with a plan to secure his blessing and write his own story. Late one night, just as he’s about to cross into the Promised Land, he’s attacked by this strange God/man who beats the tar out of him . . . and then blesses him.

The God/man is the Word of God.

He is also Jacob’s blessing.

A blessing far bigger than Jacob could even begin to imagine.

The God/man changes Jacobs name to Israel.

It means, “Wrestles with God.”

Well, the God/man that interrupted Jacob's plans is the same fellow that interrupts this trip to the hot springs. He may have interrupted some of your plans! And He asks difficult questions.

**How His Story becomes your story
and your story becomes His-Story**

1. It happens while walking
2. It happens while talking,
3. In a place of great disappointment.
4. It often begins as a problem,
5. And creates confusion and questions.

5. It often happens through confusion and a lot of questions.

I've heard Christians say: "Well, that's confusing, and 'God is not a God of confusion,' so it can't be the Truth."

Well God is not confused, but His Word sure can confuse people who thought they were not confused. I think the Truth Himself will literally sneak up to you, out on your journey to the spa, disguised so you don't recognize Him at first, and literally just confuse the hell out of you, so He can speak His heaven into you.

I've heard Christians say: "Don't ask questions, just have faith."
Well, sneaky Jesus is making them ask questions so they would have faith.
If people say, "Don't ask questions; just have faith," they probably have very, very little faith in the Truth, who is Jesus.

Jesus said, "*Seek and ye will find.*"
To seek the Truth is to ask a question.
Never love the question more than the answer, for then you're not seeking Truth. But you must ask the question to know the answer.

It's reported that Gertrude Stein, on her death-bed muttered,
"What is the question?" She muttered it again, and then said,
"If there is no question, there is no answer." Then she died.

Well, if Jesus really is the Answer (The Way, The Truth, and The Life), if Jesus really *is* the Answer, wouldn't it make a little sense that our whole existence in this fallen world might be about learning to ask the question . . . And not just with our brains, but with "*all our heart, mind, soul and strength?*"

Frederick Buechner writes: "Don't start looking in the Bible for the answers it gives. Start by listening for the questions it asks."

Like,

"Who do you say that I AM?" or

“Peter do you love me more than these?”

See, you have to take a journey to ask those questions . . .

And the answer is far greater than dead words stuck to a page.

The answer is The Life—who is your life.

Jesus asks, “What are you guys wrestling about?” “What are these words, (*logoi*), that your tossing about?”

And Cleopas asks, “What’s wrong with you? Don’t you know what’s happened in Jerusalem?”

And Jesus says, “Tell me about these things.”

And they tell Him—about the women at the tomb and the vision of angels.

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2. It happens while talking,
3. In a place of great disappointment.
4. It often begins as a problem,
5. And creates confusion and questions.
6. Pay attention to strange women and tall tales.

So that’s 6. Pay attention to strange women and tall tales – Jesus will ask about that.

And then they tell Jesus—how some of the men conducted empirical research and found the tomb to be empty.

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4. It often begins as a problem,
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6. Pay attention to strange women and tall tales.
7. Pay attention to science.

That’s 7. Pay attention to science – empirical evidence in the physical world. It was created by the Word and bears testimony to the Word.

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7. Pay attention to science.
8. Pay attention to heartburn.

And 8. Pay attention to heartburn – personal evidence in your heart.

If God is a person, and He made you for Him, perhaps the best evidence for the validity of His Word is that it “finds a place in you” (John 8:37), that you desire Him, that you hope. They said “*Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road while He opened to us the Scriptures.*”

Pay attention to heartburn out on the road, and in the Scriptures. On the road you’ll see a sunset, or hear a song, or your kids will do something. It will remind you of the Word and your heart will jump. Maybe you can’t sleep, so you’re up late watching old movies: An alien has descended into our world from another world and in him is life. Adults can’t understand him and so they want to dissect him and gain his power. However, the children love him. They know him and enter his world and his kingdom. He dies, but lives. His heart burns with light—a heart light. Then as he leaves this world, ascending into the heavens, he touches little Elliot on the forehead with his lit-up finger and says, “I’ll be right here.”

. . . And you start weeping.

Pay attention to that! That’s not hormones; that’s the gospel. Feel the burn. Pay attention to your heart burning *with* faith, hope and love, out on the road. AND pay attention to your heart burning when you read Scripture.

Feel the Burn! But we don’t always like the burn; we don’t like to hope. Because hope means that we’re not home yet. And hope means that we’re not in control of the story, for if we controlled the story, we’d already have that for which we hope, and so we’d no longer hope.

Hope burns and the burning can hurt . . .
It hurts our illusion of control.

Think of these two disciples:

They hoped and had their hopes shattered

And now they must be terrified to hope—terrified to hope—

For anything more than a long soak in a hot bath.

We’ve hoped, and been disappointed, and are afraid to hope again.

Well, if your hope is in Jesus, who is God’s Word, your hope will “*not return void.*”

And yet it feels void . . . right now.

Hope is like an empty place, longing to be filled—the bigger the hope, the bigger the void longing to be filled. Hope expands our hearts that in the words of Saint Paul, we might be “*filled with all the fullness of God.*” That’s a Hope that will burn.

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and your story becomes His-Story**

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2. It happens while talking,
3. In a place of great disappointment.
4. It often begins as a problem,
5. And creates confusion and questions.
6. Pay attention to strange women and tall tales.
7. Pay attention to science.
8. Pay attention to heartburn.
9. Don’t be “slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”

So 9. Don’t be “*slow of heart,*” in the words of Jesus, “*to believe all that the prophets have spoken*”— not “*some,*” but “*all.*”

Why are we so quick to believe Isaiah 66:24?

And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.

Why are we so quick to believe verse 24 but so slow to believe Isaiah 66:23 *that* tells us who the “all flesh” is, that looks on all “the dead bodies?”

From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD. And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies...

That must be *their own* dead bodies, and *they* are in new bodies.

Why are we so quick to believe Zephaniah 3:8?

For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.

We are so quick to believe Zephaniah 3:8 *but* so slow to believe Zephaniah 3:9

For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure speech, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with one accord.

Maybe we’re quick to believe the first part because we can write that story—all people consumed by fire. We can do that. But all people with new bodies and

brand new hearts—we can't write that story. We can only hope for that . . . but hope burns. How ironic! Maybe, hearts on fire won't be burned by the fire.

Paul wrote, *“Love hopes all things, bears all things, believes all things and endures all things.”* And Jesus said: *“You will love the Lord your God with all your heart mind soul and strength.”* *“You WILL love,”* and *“Love hopes all things.”* It sounds like it's impossible to hope too much!

“Love hopes all things.” And by the way, evil is a “no-thing.” It's the absence of God's things, and God made everything.

Why are we so quick to believe the first line of Psalm 22 *“My God my God, why have you forsaken me?”* But so slow to believe the last line of Psalm 22

Before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.

Jesus didn't ask them *to understand* all that the prophets had spoken. He asked them *to believe* all that the prophets have spoken.

Jesus said, *“Oh foolish and ‘slow of heart’ to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his Glory?”*

Suffer . . . *then* . . . Glory, that's the plot. Suffer (that's the loss of Control), then Glory (that's God in control—the revelation of the plot)

If you hide from suffering, you hide from glory.

They wanted to go to the spa, and Jesus' questions took them right back to the place of their greatest fear—the Hill of the Skull—where Jesus, the Son of God cried out, *“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”*

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3. In a place of great disappointment.
4. It often begins as a problem,
5. And creates confusion and questions.
6. Pay attention to strange women and tall tales.
7. Pay attention to science.
8. Pay attention to heartburn.
9. Don't be “slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”
10. Don't hide from the frightening places on the road and in Scripture.

10. Don't be afraid to go to the frightening places on the *road*, and in *Scripture*.

Through fear, the evil one tempts us all to *seize control* of the plot and *write* our own story. But if you write your own story, there will be no story and your heart will grow hard and dull. If you write your own story, there will be no story—no pain, no passion, no romance, no drama, no color, no poetry. If I write my own story, it will read like this:

Peter went to school, got a job, made some money, went to the beach, drank a beer and fell to sleep, went to the beach drank a beer and fell to sleep, went to the beach drank a beer and fell to sleep."

That's not much of a story!

One of my favorite movies is titled *Big Fish*. In *Big Fish*, Ed Bloom tells Will Bloom the story of his life. In the beginning, Ed Bloom had learned the plot to his own story by looking in an old woman's eye—kind of like a creepy prophet; he learned how he would die.

Ed recounts his story, and we see it. He sets out on his life's journey and takes a narrow and frightening path⁶, but comes upon a town named Spectre, where everyone writes their own story. So no one suffers, and they all get what they think they want, and so . . . stop walking. They throw their shoes over the telephone wire at the edge of town and stop walking.

In Spectre, he finds a famous poet who walked down the path before him but stopped in Spectre, and now he can't seem to write one poem:

[Clip 1 from *Big Fish* is shown]

Ed and the poet are outside in an area ideal for quiet contemplation. The poet says, "I've been working on this poem for twelve years. There is a lot of expectation." Ed responds, "Really?" The poet continues, "I don't want to disappoint my fans." "May I?" says Ed. The poet hesitantly hands over a notebook he has in hand. Ed reads the following: "*The grass is so green. The sky is so blue. Spectre is really great!*" Ed looks at the poet with a confused look on his face.

Satan tempts us all to think that Heaven is here, that it's the American Dream: a nice house, 2.5 children with good teeth. He tempts us to think that Heaven is a spa day in Emmaus. But maybe we can't get to Heaven or appreciate Heaven until we've lived the plot. We can't see the glory until we've been to the Hill of the Skull. We can't get to Easter until we've traveled through Friday.

The Evil one seduces us so that we won't keep walking.
And if we *do* keep walking, the evil one will terrify us, to get us to stop.

Ed Bloom is seduced by Spectre, but he leaves Spectre, because he knows that he hasn't lived the plot.

⁶ Because, what he recalled of Sunday school was that "the more difficult something became the more rewarding it was in the end."

[Clip from *Big Fish* is shown]

The poet is surrounded by a group of beautiful ladies. He reads, "Roses are red, violets are blue; I love Spectre." He gets up and walks away. Everyone around him sits emotionlessly. [The scene changes.] Ed Bloom is at a dance, in Spectre, with vibrant music playing in the background. He is dancing in circles.

Everyone around him has huge smiles on their faces. Ed stops dancing; the music, and everyone around, comes to a halt. Ed says, "I have to leave . . . tonight!" Ed departs from Spectre that night. He then enters a dark and dangerous path through a forest.

Ed: That night I reached two conclusions. The first is that a dangerous path is made much worse by darkness. The second is that I was hopelessly and irrevocably lost. These woods would become my graveyard. As difficult as it was to leave Spectre, I was fated to get there eventually. After all, no man can avoid reaching the end of his life.

[Trees entrap Ed as they grab him and almost suffocate him with their branches. He is frightened.]

Ed: Then I realized this wasn't the end of my life. This isn't how I die.

[Upon this revelation, Ed is released from being entangled in the branches, and he walks out of the forest as the night turns to day.]

love that; he says, "*This isn't how I die!*"

Remember, Ed Bloom saw the End and so he knew this wasn't the End. And so, fear lost all its power, and he kept walking. If you think you're at the end, and the end isn't Jesus, it's not the end, so keep walking. Jesus is the Plot and Jesus is the End.

Ed Bloom remembers how he dies. What he remembers is his baptism. At the end of the movie, Ed Bloom gets Will Bloom to believe the plot and tell him the story of how he dies. And he does. They all gather at the church, immerse him in the river, and he turns into a big fish—baptism.

Romans 6:4

We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Death is a scary place, but it's not the End.

Jesus is the End and also the Beginning. He's the Plot.
Your baptism was the revelation of the Plot.

Remember it, and you won't be seduced by this world or terrified by the end of this world. You'll keep walking into, and through, all the frightening places on your path.

I've read that many of the ancient Jews avoided prophecies like Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53—prophecies of the Messiah's suffering. Yet it was those very prophecies that revealed God's greatest glory.

Cleopas and his friend wanted to go to the spa, and Jesus' questions took them right back to the cross, to face their greatest fear and greatest shame.

God's Grace is revealed in our place of shame. Don't be afraid of the frightening places in Scripture and the frightening places in your life—for you know the Plot. You know the Plot, because the Plot knows you.

The Plot, the Logos, the Word of God is "living and active." He's walking with you down the road. Maybe you say, "I don't see Him." Maybe your eyes are kept from seeing Him. Or maybe, you do see Him; you just don't recognize Him. Whatever the case, He is with you, and you can talk to Him.

**How His Story becomes your story
and your story becomes His-Story**

1. It happens while walking
2. It happens while talking,
3. In a place of great disappointment.
4. It often begins as a problem,
5. And creates confusion and questions.
6. Pay attention to strange women and tall tales.
7. Pay attention to science.
8. Pay attention to heartburn.
9. Don't be "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken."
10. Don't hide from the frightening places on the road and in Scripture.
11. Let Jesus show you Jesus—the Plot.

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He's the Living Word. Let Him reveal Himself in the written word.

In verse 27, Jesus shows them the things concerning Himself in all of Scripture. You know, all the letters in Susan's stack of letters came together in one person, one face saying, "Peter, I love you."

And all these letters and concepts in Scripture: anger, wrath, compassion and mercy—all these apparent contradictions—come together in one battered face, crying from a cross, "*Father forgive them.*"

Scripture says, "*We've seen the glory of God shining in the face of Christ.*"

Let Jesus Show you Jesus—Talk to Him when you read Scripture, and invite Him in. You are His destination, and He is yours.

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12. Invite Jesus in.

That's 12. Invite Him in.

They invite Him in. He was a stranger, and when they invited Him in, they invited Jesus in—there are several sermons in just that (Matt. 25:35). But for now: They invite Him in to *abide* with them and to *commune* with them.

Then His story becomes their story, and their story becomes His-story. I hope you noticed that we're reading about these two "nobody nothin" disciples 2000 years later.

They're not "nobody nothing," but "somebody something."
And did you notice we're reading their story in His story – the Bible?
And did you notice that these disciples changed the world?
The Word of God incarnate—in them—changed the world.

And this is how it happened: They invited Jesus in to abide with them and commune with them. And then somehow the guest becomes the host. [Peter picks up communion bread and begins to break it.] And He took bread and broke it and gave it to them. He gives Himself to them—body broken. And all at once they forget themselves and see Him. Then, He vanishes from their sight! [Peter eats a piece of communion bread.]

Where'd He go? Where's His body now?

Well, They run back to Jerusalem, preaching the Gospel.
Not because they applied the Word to themselves.
But because the Word applied Himself to them.
They are the Body of Christ – Created in God's image, with a Word.

It wasn't far from Emmaus, in another little town, named Bethlehem, that the Word became flesh—incarnate in perfection. It was Christmas.
But now the Word is still taking on flesh—His Body.
We're not perfect, but we're being perfected—the Body of Christ.

And I found out why the Romanian government was so terrified of Scripture. It has a way of taking on flesh. And in Romania, I met some of that flesh: persecuted Christians. My friend Peter rolled up his sleeves and showed me his scars. They weren't really his scars; they were Jesus' scars, emblazoned on his body.

In Romania, the Body of Christ, filled with His Spirit of Christ, believed the Gospel, forsook their fear of death, and singing hymns caused a revolution. While the government still mowed down dissenters with machine guns, 100,000 people met in the central square in Timisoara and spontaneously dropped to their knees in public (after forty-five years) as Peter led them in reciting the Lord's prayer.

Peter showed me the bullet holes and told me the story. The dictator was deposed on Christmas Day. But it would be wrong to think that it was a political revolution. Governments will come and go, but this revolution was far more powerful than that. It turns out that the guards at the border had asked us for Bibles because they wanted to read a Bible, and, for the first time in forty-five years, they could without risking their lives. They didn't have to read; they wanted to read.

When I met my Romanian friends I understood why. Almost everyone in Romania looked like the walking dead. Their hearts were hard, dull, and slow, and I could understand why. But you could spot a believer from one hundred yards away. They were the only ones that would laugh . . . or cry. In them was Life—the Life.

Communion

For on the night that the Word, the God-man was betrayed, He took bread and broke it saying, "This is my body broken for you; take and eat, and do this in remembrance of me." And in the same way, after supper, and having given thanks He took the cup and poured it saying, "This cup is the covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you, and do this in remembrance of me."

We invite you to come to the table, and invite Him in. Surrender your story to His story, and become His story—the Body of Christ—walking in this world and not stopping in Jesus' name.

Prayer

Jesus, we thank you that you set us free from this world, from the little stories that we have written. Thank you that you set us free from Emmaus. Emmaus is not our destination but Jerusalem is our destination, and not the Old Jerusalem but the New Jerusalem. That Jerusalem is who we are. Lord God, we thank you, in Jesus' name, Amen.

Benediction

Now, I need to say, I love Emmaus. There's nothing wrong with hot springs. I love hot springs. In fact, this world is so tiring sometimes, and it's so challenging sometimes all I want to do is go and get a big bottle of wine, go sit

in the hot springs, and never get out. But do you understand Emmaus is a trap? And Emmaus is not your destination.

Your destination is Jerusalem, and so God sends His Word to you so that you would keep walking. He even walks inside of you, and with you. Sometimes, when I get like that, I just want to stop, to quit, and I can't take it. Sometimes, I will get up and watch Christian TV, and it drives me crazy because I think: *This isn't working!* Then I go and read the Bible and I think: *It's working perfectly.* Then I remember the Plot and keep walking.

You are not destined for Emmaus, you are destined for the New Jerusalem, and that's who you are. So, in Jesus' name, believe the Gospel. Amen.

Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.