

Sermon Notes: April 19, 2026

[Lectionary](#)

Focus: Emmaus

Quick summary of Emmaus

Two grief-stricken disciples journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus, failing to recognize the risen Jesus as he joins their walk and inquires about their sorrow. Jesus rebukes their lack of faith and meticulously reinterprets the Scriptures to demonstrate that the Messiah's suffering was the necessary path to his glory. After being invited into their home, Jesus reveals his identity through the familiar act of breaking bread before instantly vanishing from their sight. Transformed by the encounter, the pair immediately rushes back to Jerusalem to testify to the eleven that the Lord has indeed risen.

I want to share a little geographic and biblical context to hopefully make the story richer for you. Emmaus was no accidental destination. In the 1st century, it served as a district capital and a strategic Roman garrison. (Caveat: there are lots of Emmauses in antiquity. This Emmaus was likely Emmaus Nicopolus). This walk was a move from one shadow to another. The disciples weren't just taking a walk; they were retreating from a "failed" revolution in Jerusalem toward another seat of imperial iron. It was a flight from fear to fear. Their imagination had been slammed shut. For three years, they believed they were on a new Exodus with a new Moses—a liberator who would shatter the Roman yoke. But at the Cross, that dream died. By walking toward Emmaus, they weren't just leaving a city; they were attempting to outrun a tragedy.

We can see the biblical narrative through the lens of Three Great Departures:

The First Exodus (Moses): The movement from physical bondage toward a Promised Land. The cry was "Let my people go."

The Second Exodus (The Ministry of Jesus): The movement from darkness to life. The call was "Follow me into the Kingdom."

The Third Exodus (The Resurrection): Road back from the ruins.

On the Emmaus road, Jesus meets them in their retreat. He doesn't just offer comfort; he performs a resurrection of the imagination. The Third Exodus isn't about leaving a land; it's about leaving the "tomb" of disillusionment and getting back on the road with Jesus.

Cleopas and the "Unnamed" Disciple

While Cleopas is named, his companion remains anonymous. The "burning hearts" and shared meal take on a domestic, Eucharistic quality, sanctifying the

home as much as the Temple. The Gospel is not just for public spectacle; it is validated in private with ordinary conversations. Maybe we could place ourselves in the role of the unnamed disciple. That is very “ignatian.”

Ignatian Prayer

I don't do Ignatian prayer very often but this story lends itself to it. This is an Emmaus summary of Ignatian prayer that you can try.

Prepare

Quiet your mind and body, asking for the grace to know Jesus more intimately, love him more dearly and follow him more closely.

Visualize

Visualize the dusty road, feel the exhaustion of the disciples and hear the conversation about the recent, traumatic events in Jerusalem.

Sense

Imagine the look on the "stranger's" face, the tone of his voice, the smell of the room at the inn and the texture of the bread shared.

Converse

Talk to Jesus as a close friend, perhaps asking him to explain the scriptures to you or inviting him to stay with you for dinner because "it is nearly evening".

Feel

Pay attention to how your heart feels at this holy meal—perhaps recognizing when it "burns within you".

How to Apply the Experience:

Identify: Notice your own feelings of loss or disappointment and imagine sharing them with Jesus.

Recognize: Reflect on where you have recognized Jesus in your own life, especially in community.

Journey: God is with you in both directions of your journey: walking away from your "Jerusalem" disappointment or with him on the unknown road ahead as you leave Emmaus.

Have a good week, **Todd**