

April 26, Easter 3A (Luke 24:13-35)

## **What does Jesus do after the resurrection? Take a walk.**

by [Kirk Byron Jones](#) in the [April 22, 2020](#) issue

Super Bowl champions are known for following up their victories with a television commercial announcing that their next stop is Disney World. Amazing experience deserves amazing experience. This is strikingly different from what Jesus does after his victory over death: he takes a walk. How anticlimactic. How mundane. And yet how so like Jesus.

In the Gospels, Jesus is as interested in savoring ordinary life as he is in passing out extraordinary life. He is so interested in knowledge that as a boy he lags behind in Jerusalem to learn more, so interested in socializing that he begins his ministry at a wedding feast, so interested in people who are hurting that he becomes a healer. He is so interested in nature that he uses the ordinary lilies of the field to illuminate the extraordinary inside people, so interested in continuing a friendship that he raises Lazarus from the dead, so interested in keeping in touch after he's gone that he offers a lasting memorial to his body and blood. He is so taken with being alive that he refuses to remain dead.

Jesus' actions suggest that the saving of life, at least on this side of the grave, is the savoring of life. This is a much-needed message in a world addicted to a fast-paced, overcommitted life. To savor is to taste or smell with pleasure, to relish, to delight in. The word originates in the Latin verb *sapere*, which means both "to taste" and "to be wise." The connection between the two has never been more important. The etymology of *relishing* offers layered blessings as well. *Relax*, *release*, and *relish* all derive from *relaxare*, "to loosen." Our hyper-stressed existence cries out for the healing of savoring and relishing.

On the day of his resurrection, Jesus chooses to take a slow walk with two disciples and simply enjoy the conversation. It seems like Jesus is just happy to be breathing and moving about again. Message giving and miracle making are not at the top of

his agenda. The sensational gives way to seeing, smelling, hearing, and touching. Doing gives way to being.

There is no saving life without savoring life. One of my favorite testimonies to this is found in Madeleine L'Engle's *The Love Letters*. At a convent, Sister Joaquina has become increasingly incensed by Sister Mariana's open appreciation for life:

"I don't mean to criticize, Mother, but there's something wrong with it."

"With what, child?"

"The way Sister Mariana looks out the window at the flowers, and the way she enjoys that orange."

"Well?"

"She enjoys it too much."

Mariana's mouth was full of juicy pulp. "Aren't we supposed to?"

Deliberately choosing to savor life can be as simple as practicing holding a gaze just a moment longer at points throughout the day. Noticing, one of the gifts of a slow walk, is something precious we give up when we choose live overloaded and in a hurry. When we look too fast or don't look enough, the consequences can be embarrassingly painful. In his autobiography, Billy Graham confesses an unforgettable, humbling experience during one of his revival campaigns: he failed to recognize his own young daughter, in the arms of his sister-in-law who had been caring for her.

There is a moment of glad astonishment at the end of the walk to Emmaus with Jesus. Those who have just spent time with him notice that their hearts were burning within them. In just a short span of time and a short number of steps, they have felt more alive than ever before. This communal striding and savoring alongside Jesus has fed them the bread of life.

I grew up in the African American Baptist religious tradition in New Orleans. One of the historic and beloved features of my spiritual home is the talkback between congregation and minister during the preaching moment. Some liturgical-dialogical expressions are more common than others. One of the most familiar pew-to-pulpit

expressions is “take your time.”

“Take your time” has multiple meanings depending on the state of the sermon. A congregant seeking a deeper understanding may be urging the preacher to elaborate, to give more information. It is also possible that the preacher is talking too fast, and the expression “take your time” just means slow down. There is a third possibility. Sometimes, preachers find just the right words at just the right time. “Take your time” in this instance means that what the preacher is saying is hitting home, is meeting a genuine need. “Take your time” is a request for time to savor the portion given and a signal that a second helping—repeating a thought or phrase—would be deeply appreciated.

Jesus, risen from the dead and returned to the confines of time, takes his time. He encourages us to do the same. Truly saved lives are worth savoring each moment, every single day.