

WHEN JESUS WALKS WITH YOU — AND YOU DON'T KNOW IT

Luke 24:13–35

INTRO

Here we are – the last Sunday of 2025 ... Typically – at the end of the year – I like to share a message that centers on self-evaluation – or reflecting over the past year ... But I'm going to change it up this year ... Starting next Sunday – the Lord has given me a clear direction – a focused series of messages – that He wants me to share with His Ekklesia.

So – before we step into that deep and mystical journey – there is a couple of critical foundational principle that I must share first ... And we find those principles revealed with striking clarity – here in Luke chapter 24 ... Here we see two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus ... They are replaying recent events ... Processing disappointment while trying to make sense of what they had just experienced ... And while they are reasoning together – discussing Jesus – Jesus Himself begins walking alongside them.

And this brings us to a foundational principle we must grapple with as we enter into a new year ... We can think about Jesus ... Reason with each other about Jesus ... We can pray or converse with Jesus ... All the while missing the reality that He is standing right beside us – fully present – fully engaged – yet unrecognized ... So let's step into this text together – and allow the Holy Spirit to awaken us to these deeply mystical truths ... Now catch this ...

Jesus was Walking with Them – Yet They Never Recognized Him

Luke 24:15-16 Contemporary English Version

Jesus came near and started walking along beside them ... 16 But they did not know who he was.

Let this really sink in for a moment ... Jesus was right there – yet they had no awareness of His presence ... Here is a mystical reality – we must fully grasp – as we move forward into the new year ... Jesus’ presence is never the issue – our awareness of His presence is.

Scripture confirms His presence again and again ... Acts 17:28 declares – “In Him we live and move and have our being” ... Colossians 1:17 reveals – “He is before all things – and in Him all things hold together” ... Jesus is not occasionally present ... He is perpetually present ... Because if He were not – nothing would exist.

Now catch this – we have been taught a subtle but dangerous lie ... Jesus does not come and go from our lives depending on how we live ... We do not summon Him in moments of crisis ... We do not earn His presence through our behavior ... He is the very atmosphere of all existence ... There is no life apart from Him ... The only reason we exist right now – is because He is alive – and we are all connected to Him.

So, the question becomes – why don’t we recognize His presence? ... Why are we so often oblivious to the One in whom we live and breathe? ... These two disciples were walking with Jesus – speaking about Jesus – yet completely unaware that He was right beside them ... Why? ... I believe Scripture reveals two primary dangerous conditions that dull our awareness.

First – there is the Danger of a Conscience – that becomes compromised – through deception.

1 Timothy 4:1-2 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition

But the [Holy] Spirit distinctly and expressly declares that in latter times some will turn away from the faith, - giving attention to deluding and seducing spirits - and doctrines that demons teach, ... 2 Through the hypocrisy and pretensions of liars whose consciences are seared

Here we see the destructive power of deception working through the ego ... The enemy exploits ego to create strongholds ... And to the degree a person cooperates with deception – the result is a conscience that loses sensitivity ... A seared conscience completely dulls all spiritual awareness ... It numbs discernment – and eventually leads a person to deny truth altogether.

But there is another dangerous heart condition that is far more common.

Matthew 13:22 The Message

“The seed cast in the weeds is the person who hears the kingdom news, but weeds of worry and illusions about getting more and wanting everything under the sun strangle what was heard, and nothing comes of it.

This is the heart consumed with this realm ... Fixated on everything under the sun ... Focused on circumstances – disappointments – unmet expectations – unresolved questions ... This is the ego-driven life ... A life ruled by assumptions – analysis – and constant mental noise ... Jesus warned us plainly in Mark 4:19 – “The worries of this world crowd out the Word and it produces nothing.”

Awareness is not lost because Jesus is absent ... It is lost because the heart becomes crowded and distracted ... Unfortunately – this is where so many folk live ... Surrounded by the noise of life ... Distracted by circumstances ... Consumed with analysis ... Weighed down by the cares of this world ... And completely unaware that Jesus is already present in the very moment we are trying to figure out.

A lack of awareness caused by worldly distraction is dangerous ... But there is another danger – one that may be even more subtle ... Looking for validation of His presence in the natural realm instead of recognizing Him inwardly ... And this brings us to the next point ...

The Kingdom Communicates Internally

Luke 24:32 Passion Translation

“They said to one another, ‘Didn’t our hearts burn with the flame of Holy passion while he walked beside us and unveiled the Scriptures to us?’”

As they continued walking together – Jesus began to speak ... He opened the Scriptures ... He reframed their understanding ... He brought clarity to their confusion ... And yet – they still did not recognize Him ... Why? ... Because recognition in the Kingdom does not begin with information – it begins with internal resonance.

Spiritual recognition happens in the heart – not the head ... Kingdom awareness is not validated through natural eyesight – but through inward discernment ... Religion has trained us to look outwardly for spiritual proof ... We are taught to look for signs – manifestations – visible evidence – as confirmation that God is present ... Yet Jesus clearly said – the Kingdom of God is within you ... Which means the primary place of recognition is internal.

Luke 17:20-21 Amplified Bible, Classic Edition

Asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, ... He replied to them by saying, ... The kingdom of God does not come with signs to be observed - - or with visible display, ... Nor will people say, - Look! - Here [it is]! or, See, [it is] there! ... For behold, the kingdom of God is within you [in your hearts] and among you [surrounding you].

Let me remind you of something I already said ... Being oblivious to Jesus' constant presence because we are consumed with self – or distracted by life – is dangerous enough ... But here we uncover an even deeper deception ... Seeking spiritual validation through natural means.

This mindset produces statements like – God blessed me with this new car – or the Holy Spirit isn't in that church or ministry ... As if the presence of God is proven by outcomes – objects – or environments ... This is not Kingdom truth – it is religious ideology.

The Kingdom functions differently than this natural realm ... Experiencing the Kingdom is an internal reality ... The Kingdom speaks to the inner man ... It reveals truth through inward resonance ... Only after that inner awakening takes place does the Kingdom manifest outwardly ... This is a critical Kingdom principle ... Internal resonance always precedes external recognition ... Awakening happens inwardly before it is ever understood outwardly.

And here is the sobering question we must ask ourselves ... How often do we ignore the burning heart because circumstances have not changed yet? ... How often do we override the inward witness because we are trained to look for outward proof? ... How often do we miss what Jesus is saying – because we are waiting to see instead of learning how to discern? ... Now – let's move to the final foundational concept we must grasp.

Awakening doesn't Change the Circumstances – It Changes How You Will Deal with Them

Luke 24:30–31 Passion Translation

“When he sat down with them at the table, he took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them. Suddenly their eyes were opened and they recognized him — but instantly he vanished from their sight.”

When their eyes are finally opened and they recognize Jesus – something fascinating happens ... Jesus disappears from their sight ... And yet – they are not confused – not discouraged – nor afraid ... They are now awakened ... Luke tells us they immediately rise and return to Jerusalem ... Same road – same distance – same night – but with an entirely different posture ... Their situation did not change – but they did – this is the fruit of awakening.

Awakening does not remove you from life – nor does it erase difficulty ... But it will change how you walk through it – if you will let it ... The road will probably remain the same ... but your purpose is restored ... Your vision will be clear ... And your heart will become alive – aware – and resonating with your Kingdom destiny.

Now catch this very important distinction ... Jesus did not leave them – He revealed Himself to them ... And once their awareness was awakened within them – they no longer needed visible confirmation of Jesus' presence – their hearts burned with it.

This is what the Spirit is desiring to awaken us to this morning ... He is not looking to radically change us ... He is desiring to radically awaken us to the truth that we are one with Him ... Let me help you with a new year resolution – desire to be awakened to the reality of your oneness with Christ.

TAKEAWAY

So – as we step into a new year ... I want to leave you with one simple Kingdom practice – which I call – The Pause ... So, what does that mean? ... Throughout your daily activities — when you start getting frustrated ... When you feel your emotions coming on strong ... When you become confused and your mind starts racing ... STOP and Pause ... Then remind yourself – Jesus is present with me.

The two disciples on the road were unaware of His presence because their attention was fixed on current events – disappointment – and confusion ... And if we are honest – we do the very same thing ... Awakening begins when we slow down long enough to recognize that His presence is not something we must invite – it is something we must become aware of ... Jesus does not need to arrive to intervene in your situation ... He is already there – ready to give wisdom – clarity – and peace – if we will pause long enough to notice Him.

As we close out 2025 – may your heart desire – and actively seek – a greater awareness of His presence in your everyday life ... Let me leave you with this Scripture to meditate upon.

James 4:8 Mirror Translation

“Draw near to God, - - and you will discover - - that HE has always been close to you. ... Cleanse your hands, you double-minded people, and let your hearts be fully focused.”