

Imagine – these two disciples on their way to Emmaus. They walk slowly, perhaps in silence, perhaps stopping again and again because they cannot quite find the words. Everything they had hoped for seems to be over. Jesus is dead, their dreams are shattered, and the future feels uncertain. So they walk away from Jerusalem, away from the community, back toward what used to be normal.

That is how this story is usually told. But if we pause for a moment and look more closely, we begin to sense that it may be larger than it first appears.

People in those days rarely traveled alone. They moved together—as families, as groups, as communities. And we know from the Gospels that those who followed Jesus were not only men. There were many women. Women who walked with him, who listened, who believed, who supported his ministry. And very often, they did all of this in the background.

Women carried the weight of everyday life. They raised children, made sure a household functioned, put food on the table, held things together when everything else threatened to fall apart. While men were out preaching, working, being seen, women were holding everything in place. Not spectacularly, not loudly, not in the spotlight, but in ways that were absolutely essential.

Perhaps it was the same on the road to Emmaus.

Perhaps it was not only two men walking, but a small group.

Perhaps a woman walked alongside them, listening, carrying the conversation in quiet ways. Perhaps she was the one who noticed what no one else said out loud—the fear, the disappointment, and also the faint hope that had not quite disappeared.

Perhaps she was the one who sensed that something was different about the stranger who suddenly joined them.

The stranger asks, “What are you discussing?” And they tell him about Jesus, about what has happened, about what has been lost. And the stranger listens. He walks with them. He stays. This is so often how God comes into our lives—not in dramatic ways, but right in the middle of our journey, our conversations, our confusion.

Then he begins to speak. He opens the scriptures to them and connects what has happened to God's larger story. Slowly, something begins to change. Not all at once, not in a dramatic revelation, but like a small fire beginning to glow. A thought, a sentence, a feeling. Later they will say, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road?"

When they reach their destination, it is evening. Time to rest. They invite the stranger to stay. And again, this is one of those quiet moments that often happen in the background: someone makes space, prepares a table, makes sure there is bread. Someone creates the conditions for community to exist. How often have women done exactly that—then and now—not on a stage, but in the places where life actually happens?

And it is there, at the table, in the breaking of the bread, that everything changes. Jesus takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them. And in that moment, their eyes are opened, and they recognize him. Not on the road, not in the explanation, but in a simple, ordinary act.

Perhaps that is not accidental. Perhaps this story is telling us that God's presence is often revealed in places of care, in acts of hospitality, in the quiet work of holding community together, in the spaces that are so often shaped by those who remain unseen.

Then Jesus vanishes. And what remains is recognition—and movement. They get up that very hour and return to Jerusalem, back to the community, back into life.

In the book of Acts, we hear how this movement continues. Peter stands and speaks, people are moved, thousands are baptized, and a new community is formed. But this does not happen because of one person alone. It is a network of relationships, of people who carry, believe, and share. And within that, women are not simply present on the margins—they are part of the very fabric of what is happening.

The First Letter of Peter reminds us that our worth and our identity come from God. Not from being visible, not from having our names recorded, not from having our work publicly recognized, but from the fact that God sees us, knows us, and has given us new birth into a living hope.

Perhaps this is the quiet but powerful message for us today: that what happens in the background is not less valuable. That what is often overlooked is fully seen by God. That those who hold things together, who support, who care, who believe, are part of the resurrection story.

Perhaps we are invited to hear the Emmaus story differently—not only as the story of two disciples, but as the story of a community in which women walk, believe, and carry alongside others. Often unnamed, but never unimportant.

And perhaps we are called to look more closely and listen more carefully, to notice the stories that have not been written down, to hear the voices that are quieter. Because without them, the story is incomplete.

Christ walks with the visible and the invisible, with those on the stage and those in the background. And he makes himself known, sometimes in the most ordinary places—in daily life, in shared bread, in lived community.

So we continue on the journey, with hearts that burn and eyes that are being opened, trusting that God is at work even through what is so often overlooked.

Amen.