

1. Walking in Life

Intro

➤ *Walking in circles*

- “How is your walk?”
- The picture of walking shows up all over Scripture...

➤ *“Walk Across America”*

- The thought that life is a journey is not unfamiliar to our culture. But there is a key difference from how the Bible presents the path of life.

➤ *Louis Vuitton travel bag commercial*

➤ *On the Road* by Jack Kerouac

- The open road: We love the thought of *leaving home* more than the idea of arriving at a settled destination...

“Throughout history various religious traditions have used the imagery of pilgrimage or journey to describe spiritual development. These journeys were focused on an eternal destination, a spiritual transformation of the individual. Today, however, the ‘pilgrimage’ is all about the individual’s own life journey. In the past the individual gained a sense of solace knowing that despite life’s disappointments and inevitable suffering, meaning was still found in God’s will for every individual. Sociologist Francesca Collins wonders, ‘Perhaps the “journey” is a secularized version of “God’s will.”’ ...By seeing life as a journey we can enjoy the moral cost-free benefits of secular living, but then later can Photoshop a layer of meaning over our lives by recounting our experiences as part of our ‘life journey.’ The confusion, fragmentation, and randomness of living in a secular culture loses some of its sting when we apply the ‘journey’ tag to our messy lives. ...When we open the pages of Scripture we find a different kind of person from the person of the road. A person of the way. The way of Christ. A pilgrim of a road that does not lead to the tantalizing potential of a future destination but instead to a wooden cross. A way that promises life eternal but that also demands total obedience, complete surrender, and death to self.”

–Mark Sayers, *The Road Trip That Changed the World*, 48, 52

- You are walking on a road. Where are you heading? Who are you following?

Ephesians 4:1

Alive to God

The Walking Dead

“And you were dead in the trespasses and sins 2 in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— 3 among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.” (Eph. 2:1-3)

- Spiritual *activity* does not mean spiritual *life*.
- Walking in death: You treat your own desires that don't have anything to do with God as ultimate. You follow what you want when you want it.

Called to Life

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” (Eph:4-5)

- There cannot be something more dramatic than this!
 - *Returning from your own funeral*
- This is the language of encounter: Alive to the reality of God. Awakened to his presence. To be alive is to be captured by him—for there to be new desires and longings to know him.
- God, in his mercy, calls us. Jesus meets us and calls us to follow him.
 - *Paul's encounter on the road*
- Everything in Paul's world radically changed. His dreams and passions and motives were turned upside down. There was a cause that everything answered to.
 - *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy – “Carrying the fire”

“But in the dark I have no name
...When your hope's on fire
But you know your desire
Don't hold a glass over the flame
Don't let your heart grow cold
I will call you by name
I will share your road

But hold me fast, hold me fast
'Cause I'm a hopeless wanderer
And hold me fast, hold me fast
'Cause I'm a hopeless wanderer
I will learn, I will learn to love the skies I'm under”
—“Hopeless Wanderer” by **Mumford & Sons**

- If there's nothing beyond this world, you lose any awareness of a *higher calling*.

“The trouble is that, as modern people, we have too much to live with and too little to live for.”
–Os Guinness, *The Call*, 4

- A secular world journeys for a purpose—but a barren universe does not provide one. So we do our best to create our own little purposes and goals.

➤ “Disenchanted” Culture

➤ Social Media Awareness / Product RED / Toms

“Philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek is a brutal critic of this sort of thing. In a lecture, he talked about how Starbucks made a big deal about donating a tiny fraction of their overpriced coffee to ‘some stupid Guatemala children or whatever.’ If you think that sounds harsh and dismissive, that is Žižek’s exact point: people like that Starbucks donates this money because of how it makes them feel about themselves, not because of deep concern for the actual children. We hardly think of the children...until Žižek calls them stupid.”
–Mike Cosper, *Recapturing the Wonder: Transcendent Faith in a Disenchanted World*, 101

- There is a Call on the road. What are you living *for*? What are you walking *toward*?

“Calling by its very nature reminds us that we are only followers of Christ when in fact we follow Christ—in other words, when we leave all other allegiances and walk after him, doing what he says and living as he requires. ...The point is easily overlooked: ‘The Way’ is for traveling. Either we progress, however slowly and unsurely, or we are not on the Way.”
–Os Guinness, *The Call*, 105

Alive to Growth

A New Way to Walk

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10)

- You notice someone by their walk... Our walk should *resemble* Someone else’s walk.

“Whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked” (1 John 2:6)

“We were buried 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” (Rom. 6:4)

“And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules” (Ezek. 36:27)

A Maturing Walk

“until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ” (Eph. 4:13-15)

- Living things grow.

“Growth is a necessary survival function for all living things. If a flower grows, it’s alive. If it stops (or never starts), it withers and dies. That’s basic biology. The same is true for Christians. When the gospel saved us, it made us alive in Christ, breathing life into our dead hearts (Col. 2:13). We became wide awake and hungry spiritual newborns, thirsty sprouts, our eyes freshly opened to the world. And immediately, we started growing. That growth will never stop. It’s a sign of spiritual life. We will inescapably keep learning and growing and growing and learning, on and on, forever. A Christian that doesn’t grow is an oxymoron. It doesn’t exist. To follow Christ is to be a lifelong learner. We grow because we’re alive.”

–**Jaquelle Crowe**, *This Changes Everything: How the Gospel Transforms the Teen Years*, 98

➤ *A toddler’s walk vs. a stable walk*

- The teenage years are not years for wandering and wasting. They are years for growth!
- What did your study of God look like in 2017?

“Study and meditation, application and obedience develop in us the ability to see clearly, to distinguish between what is true and false, and also between what is good and what is really best. ...The Word seeps into our instincts so that we sense the superficial and detest teaching that is sinister or dangerous.... Far from being immature, spiritual teenagers as it were, driven by our emotions, attracted by spiritual ‘spin’, shaped by the passing trends of peer pressure, we live by the Word of God and grow strong.” –**Sinclair Ferguson**, *Let’s Study Ephesians*, 113

Leaving Old Paths

“Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Eph. 4:17-24)

- The New Self: Who I am in Jesus.

➤ *Augustine: "It's no longer me."*

- What have you "put off"?? What have you "put on"??
- Filling up your mind with truth...

"I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, 18 having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints" (Eph. 1:16-18)

- Recipe for Change: Reading the Bible → Meditation → Prayer → Obedience

Staying the Course

- There is something so *ordinary* about this.

"A long obedience in the same direction" (Eugene Peterson)

➤ *Pilgrim's Progress*

- Christianity is not only a walk; it is an endurance race.