

“You’ll Never Walk Alone”

Mother’s Day

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The Woodside Church

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I’m Angela Pakyanadhan. The appropriate way to introduce myself on Mother’s Day is, I’m the mother of Sudeep Pakyanadhan, the organist at Woodside.

Join me in greeting your neighbor with an Indian greeting, “Namaste.” We do it with folded palms and a slight bow. It means, “I recognize God in you, and I bow to God in you.”

The text I’m using today is from Exodus 33:14 “My Presence will go with you,”

The Bible passage that we’re going to look at today is from the Gospel of Luke, the 24th Chapter, verses 13-19 & 27-33

Luke 24: 13 “Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him. 17 He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

19 “What things?” he asked.

27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. 32 They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

33 They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together.

GPS! Invented by Gladys West, Bradford Parkinson, and Roger Easton. We're familiar with GPS- in our journeys we depend on it. It gives us preview of our route, the time it takes to reach our destination, the route, the tolls, the rest stops and the gas stations on the route. We're happy as we feel we're in control. How we wish our life could be that way! All chartered out and every detail mapped out!

The passage I just read is my story- my journey, my walk with Jesus, my GPS. The Lord told Moses, "My Presence will go with you," God did not merely guide me from a distance, but walked with me through every season of life.

1. **Eyes opened:** The walk to Emmaus is on the day of the resurrection. Two disciples were walking from Jerusalem. They were disappointed, although they had heard about the resurrection. Then Jesus joined them, he asked them what they were discussing and then explained what they were talking about. Verse 31 says, "Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him," They have been talking about Him, walking with Him and yet the most striking matter is this- Jesus is not recognized as the risen Lord for practically the entire time He is with the two travelers- Cleopas and his friend. Perhaps this has to do with where our eyes are fixed. Their eyes were fixed on the fact that Jesus died. Are ours fixed on whatever the problem is at our hand? In the simple act of His breaking bread with them, their eyes were opened to see Him. The Emmaus dinner has the reminder of the Lord's Supper in the pattern that was followed. He is with us in the communion table. It was a simple meal, breaking of bread together that they recognized Him.

In II Kings 6th chapter, Elisha's servant panics looking at the enemy around. The king of Aram had sent horses, chariots and a great army to surround Dotham in Israel where Elisha was. Elisha could see the Lord's invisible army, but his servant couldn't. In the stressful situation, Elisha prays and says, Lord, open his eyes that he may see" The servant saw the mountain filled with horses and chariots of fire representing God's angels – His powerful, protecting heavenly host.

Are my eyes opened to see Him? Is that only during worship, or when I partake of His body and blood, or are my eyes open to see Him in the ordinary moments of life, walking, talking, or in our breaking bread together. We have this saying, "Christ is the head of this home, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation." Why is He unseen? Why is He silent? Is that what makes us comfortable? We're in control- He is unseen and silent.

As I opened my eyes, I am told, I was born in a mission hospital in the southern tip of India. My parents, my grandparents and my entire family knew and served Christ. There is not a day that I remember when I did not know Jesus Christ. I was introduced to Him right from early childhood. On Mother's Day I especially honor my mother, my grandmothers (Kiruba- meaning Grace and Satha meaning truth), my sister, and my aunts, all who played an important role in leading me to Christ. They made us- I and my

cousins memorize Scripture passages. We did not get our Sunday lunch before we recited the Bible passage allotted to us. They modeled prayer and spent time every day with their daily devotion.

My earliest memories are of waking up and going and lying down with my head on my mother's lap, as she read her Bible and all the devotional books that she read each day – a habit that she continues till today at 89 years of age.

Today, life is not as simple as it was when I was a child. But as I keep trusting in God's constant promised presence, God continues to open my eyes. In my confusion, in my fear, in my doubts, in my anxiety, in my ordinary routines, the question is never, "Is He present?" The question is, "Do I recognize Him?" His promise for each one of us, is the same. "My Presence will go with you," The question to each one of us is also the same. Not "Is He present?" The question is "Will you recognize Him?" Will you open your eyes to the ordinary things around you – family, friends, nature, sunsets, and see Him?

Will we really open our eyes to see Him? God is all around us. He is within us. Do I just walk through life or do I walk with the one who is life?

2. **Hearts burning:** Christ has the ability to make sense of things. The travelers on the road to Emmaus had their hopes dead, and buried when they were walking and talking with the one who was LIFE! As Christ explains Scripture to them, they recall, 'Did not our hearts burn within us? Passion was ignited by Scripture as Jesus explains Scripture to them. That must have been some Bible Study! Jesus explained all that Scripture said about Him. Jeremiah, the Psalmist and others experienced burning hearts. Do you want your heart on fire for God? It's simple. Are you a student of His Word? Are you part of a Growth Group?

As I grew up, I experienced another type of a burning heart when I married Sushil, the love of my life. Life seemed complete, and we were praying and waiting on God to bless us with a child. After five years of waiting, Sudeep was born, bringing great joy in our home. His name means, "bright light" and he is certainly a bright light in our lives. He grew up, and his passion turned very unusual for someone his age- pipe organs! He composed music in the night. Now, each time he plays, he imagines that he is in a huge English cathedral!

But life does not always go smoothly as planned. My health challenges led to memory loss, forgetfulness, and brain fog. I struggled teaching at the college where I was working. I couldn't remember my own telephone number, and to think I had memorized all 176 verses of Psalm 119! Chikungunya and Rheumatoid arthritis in my forties made me dependent on others. I could not brush my own teeth, or hair or dress myself. Depression set in. I went through the motions of life. My friend Amy told me to meditate on Nehemiah 8:10, "The joy of the Lord is my strength." I took her advice seriously – every night I repeated it over and over. "The joy of the Lord is my strength." "The joy of the Lord is my strength." Then I started meditating on other Bible verses I knew on Joy- 'The fruit of the Spirit is Joy,' 'Weeping may endure for the night, but joy comes in the morning.' "I will turn their mourning into joy." Then I started with the word strength... "I can do all things through Christ who

strengthens me.” ‘He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. “They that wait on the Lord will renew their strength.” And so on. The Scripture I had memorized as a child came back with life and healing. And I could again say with the travelers to Emmaus, that my heart was burning as God opened the Scriptures to me and they became alive. “My Presence will go with you,” was what He had promised. He showed me how true that was. He is truly our Emmanuel – our God with us! Try it out! Don’t just walk through life, walk with the one who is life.

- 3. Feet Walking:** The two disciples had walked seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Burning hearts is not just an emotion. Burning hearts leads to action. They both got up and returned at once to Jerusalem, is what the Bible tells us- back to Jerusalem, back to the rest of the disciples, back to the mission that God had given them to, “Go and tell.” These two people, when they received such joy, hastened to share it. Seven mile trek back in the dark, but they could not keep the good news to themselves. The apostles went about walking to serve Him to the uttermost parts of the world. The Christian message is never fully ours, until we have shared it with someone else. In Jerusalem, they found others who had already shared their experience. Church is a fellowship of people who share common experiences, common memory of the Lord and go together into His mission field.

I was born in South India, in the state of Tamil Nadu, and was baptized there. I moved to Hyderabad, where I studied, worked, where we were married and raised Sudeep. God moved us to Woodside Presbyterian Church at Yardley, where we worship now. No map or GPS. He makes me walk in faith with Him one day at a time.

“My Presence will go with you,” is His promise to Moses and to each one of us. He was with the children of Israel, as a visible pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. In Jesus, the Word made flesh, God dwells among us. His Spirit lives within each of His children. He is not only the host in His church, He is the guest in every home. Our fellowship with the risen Lord is much like these two travelers. We are on a road, a journey. He walks with us. He is our fellow traveler. We are never alone. He is our traveling companion. Why is it so difficult to simply trust that God will be with us and take us where we need to be? We have a GPS too- our God Positioning System. Because of Jesus Christ, we know how to live.

A man once proudly switched on Google Maps during a road trip. Confident, relaxed, slightly smug—until the voice calmly said: “Recalculating...” He ignored it. Again: “Recalculating...” Still he ignored it and went on his way. Finally, in frustration, he shouted, “I know where I’m going!” But, ten minutes later he reached a dead end. The irony? The guide was always with him... but he refused to listen to it. Isn’t that us? We want God’s presence—but not always His direction. We want God near—but not necessarily God speaking. Jesus is Emmanuel. He is with us. His presence is our GPS. Don’t just walk through life; walk with the one who is LIFE.

Would you greet yourself with a, “Namaste” Would you see The Lord within you? Would you bow to The Lord who is within you? Would you see The Lord around you and bow to The Lord around you? Will you pray with me?

Prayer: Lord, I thank you that your presence goes with me, and that I never walk alone. Open my eyes that I may see you, have my heart burn for you, and walk where you want me to go. Amen.