In case you didn’t know, there are experts who will tell you how to shake a hand, how to walk and talk, how to look confident when you go for a job interview.

Our first “expert” was our mom, telling us: “Stop slouching! “Stand up straight!” “Say: ‘Please,’ and ‘Thank you!’” “Don’t mumble when you talk!” “Look at people when they’re talking to you!”

You can tell a lot about a person by their body language — whether they’re confident or insecure, happy or sad, enthusiastic or bored. When Jesus approached the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he didn’t have to be omniscient to notice something was wrong: They stood still, their faces downcast. Their body language spoke … “sad and disappointed” … loud and clear.

Jesus could have put an end to it right then and there by saying: “Hey guys, it’s me, Jesus. I’m alive!” Instead, he wanted to walk and talk and eventually eat with them. They just didn’t know it, yet. His question: “What are you talking about,” wasn’t to gain information. He already knew what the problem was. He wanted them to tell him so he could: “Turn Their Frown Upside Down!”

Today’s Bible Story has 3 parts: The Frown, The Turn, The Upside Down.

1) The Frown ….. It’s hard for us to understand the disappointment they felt. Like so many others, Cleopas and his buddy saw so much promise in Jesus. He seemed to be the Messiah they were waiting for. He taught with authority. He performed miracles. He showed concern for everyone. But then on Good Friday his lifeless body was removed from the cross and placed in a tomb. Jesus wasn’t who they hoped he would be.

The traveler who joined their walk that Easter afternoon was Jesus, but he prevented them from recognizing it. Though Jesus had the same human body after his resurrection, his body was now glorified. He could change his appearance when and where and how he pleased, like he did earlier in the day with Mary Magdalene.

We might be shocked they didn’t know it was Jesus. They were shocked this traveler didn’t know what everyone in Jerusalem was talking about.

Ironically, they began to spill their guts about Jesus … to Jesus: “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.” Good Friday had crushed their hopes. Their disappointment was evident in their use of the past tense … He was a prophet, we had hoped he was the one. What began as a promising career, didn’t end that way, at least in their eyes. Patiently, Jesus continued to listen and learn what was weighing so heavy on their hearts.

Imagine you and I are taking a walk together … when Jesus (we don’t know it’s Jesus) jumps in and asks: “What are you talking about? “Are you new to our planet?” … We ask … “Don’t you know about all the things going on?” “What things?” Jesus asks. “Well, we’re followers of Jesus. He died for our sins, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. By faith in him we have eternal life. The Bible tells us he rules everything for our good. But we had hoped that things would be better for us, as his followers. We had hoped we’d be healthy and wealthy, but we face all kinds of trials and troubles. Our bodies get sick, wear out and die. Our relationships fall apart. We struggle to make ends meet. We had hoped that Jesus would do something about the evil in the world. We love Jesus and believe in him, it’s just that we had higher hopes for our lives in him.”

Each of us could add our own list of personal disappointments, things that make us frown. But, because Jesus also loves us, he patiently listens to us. That’s why we need to regularly walk with him. He’s always ready to deal with our disappointment. As we walk with him and he talks with us in his Word, he reminds us that he lives and reigns in order to deal with our disappointments.

2) The Turn ….. Those two disciples were so disappointed. Now, they expressed their confusion: “It’s the third day since all this took place.” It had been three days since Jesus’ death – and nothing had happened. What had they expected to happen? From what we’ve heard so far: None of the disciples expected to see a risen
Jesus. And yet, could the facts about Jesus’ resurrection have been any clearer? Everything happened the way Jesus said it was going to happen.

After walking with them and patiently listening to their confusion and disappointment, Jesus kind of lets them have it: How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

The guy who seemed to be clueless about what happened in Jerusalem, suddenly had all the answers. He started in the Book of Genesis and walked them through the OT and God’s plan of salvation. What a Bible class Jesus conducted that first Easter afternoon! You wonder what Bible passages he picked to show the Messiah would be raised to life after his death and that all who believe in him would be resurrected to life because he was resurrected to life?

This was the key to clearing up confusion, and driving away disappointment. This was the proof their hopes were not misplaced.

Let’s be honest, we struggle to believe what we can’t see. At times, there’s confusion over what Jesus has said and done. Like Cleopas and his buddy, Jesus needs to let us have it for being foolish and slow to believe what the Bible records about him and his promises.

And just like them, Jesus also takes us back into the Scriptures. Starting with the prophecies of the OT, and then on to the record of his life in the Gospels, and from there to the NT Epistles where we see how that message applies to our daily lives, and then concludes with our ultimate victory in the Revelation he gave to John. Jesus clears up our confusion and explains who he is and what he has done. He is who we hoped he’d be.

That’s why taking walks with our Lord is vital to our faith. Whenever we gather for worship and Bible study. Whenever we open the Bible for our personal devotions Jesus’ cross and empty grave clears up our confusion and drives away our disappointment.

3) The Upside Down ..... By the time they reached home they still didn’t know Jesus was alive, but their confusion about Jesus had been cleared up. Their frown had been turned upside down.

The Holy Spirit – the same flame that would land on the disciples in 50 days on Pentecost – was burning in their hearts. This wasn’t a momentary emotional high. This was much deeper. It was a new hope, a deeper joy, a greater assurance that let them realize Jesus’ death and his rising from the dead were all part of God’s salvation plan. And they couldn’t get enough of it. They begged him: “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” They were hungry for more and they wouldn’t take no for an answer.

Jesus again changed his appearance, now they recognized him but then he disappeared. They had no intention of just sitting around. They had to tell the others. True faith has to speak the Word which fortifies faith in fellow believers, and invites faith in non-believers.

That 7-mile return trip to Jerusalem took a lot less time than their 90-minute walk home. Once they got there, their friends confirmed what they already knew: “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” They could add another sighting of the risen Lord to that growing list.

What was it that finally tipped them off after spending at least almost 2 hours with Jesus? It was the broken bread.

Some have wondered why this traveler whom they invited to stay as their guest, would become the host who took the bread, spoke a prayer and then broke off some and gave it to his hosts?

Because of his obvious grasp of Scripture, he had become someone with higher authority. In that culture, they acknowledge that by giving him the honor of being the host.

Jesus just walked with us through another Bible Story today. And he asks us to keep walking with him and to keep listening to him. Yes, at times, he’ll let us have it, but he’ll always tell us what we need to hear. And as he does, he deals with our disappointment and clears up our confusion. He’s the one who can turn our frown upside down.