

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt

Third Sunday of Easter - Year A

Week 7 of Quarantine

St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Acts 2:1-14a, 36-41

Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19

1 Peter 1:17-23

Luke 24:13-35

04/26/2020

### **Gospel**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke:

**24:13** Now that very day two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. **24:14** They were talking to each other about all the things that had happened. **24:15** While they were talking and debating these things, Jesus himself approached and began to accompany them **24:16** (but their eyes were kept from recognizing him). **24:17** Then he said to them, "What are these matters you are discussing so intently as you walk along?" And they stood still, looking sad. **24:18** Then one of them, named Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?" **24:19** He said to them, "What things?" "The things concerning Jesus the Nazarene," they replied, "a man who, with his powerful deeds and words, proved to be a prophet before God and all the people; **24:20** and how our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be condemned to death, and crucified him. **24:21** But we had hoped that he was

the one who was going to redeem Israel. Not only this, but it is now the third day since these things happened. **24:22** Furthermore, some women of our group amazed us. They were at the tomb early this morning, **24:23** and when they did not find his body, they came back and said they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. **24:24** Then some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him.” **24:25** So he said to them, “You foolish people – how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **24:26** Wasn’t it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and enter into his glory?” **24:27** Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things written about himself in all the scriptures. **24:28** So they approached the village where they were going. He acted as though he wanted to go farther, **24:29** but they urged him, “Stay with us, because it is getting toward evening and the day is almost done.” So he went in to stay with them. **24:30** When he had taken his place at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. **24:31** At this point their eyes were opened and they recognized him. Then he vanished out of their sight. **24:32** They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?” **24:33** So they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and those with them gathered together **24:34** and saying, “The Lord has really risen, and has appeared to Simon!” **24:35** Then they told what had happened on the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread.

The Gospel of our Lord

### Prayer

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

### Loss

Good morning! Have you ever lost something? Now, lost can mean a few different things. In the traditional sense, maybe you misplace your car keys. Or, if you're anything like me, you lost your sunglasses (which is incidentally why I don't buy nice sunglasses.) We can lose things in other ways too. Maybe we lost an old friend to time or distance, or as I did this Friday, we lost the ability to use something that meant a great deal to us. This is a lens for any Canon FD mount film cameras from the 1970's and 1980's. Particularly, it's for a Canon AE-1 Program that I have. The lens isn't of any particular value, a used one in good condition can be had for \$20-30. But this one was important to me because it belonged to my grandfather who died when I was 13. And unfortunately, this Friday while trying to take a picture, my tripod fell over and the lens hit my kitchen tile floor.

Now, that hurt a lot, but the pain of this loss is nothing compared to what the disciples were experiencing on that road to Emmaus. We've jumped Gospels from John last week to the Gospel of Luke this week, but we're still on that first Easter day. This is a powerful story. The road to Emmaus remains not just one of my favorites, but countless generations have been drawn to this text. As Dr. Eric Barreto notes: "*The story is a narrative wonder. Irony, misunderstanding, drama, a reveal: these are components of powerful story.*" The two disciples, possibly blinded by their grief, are unable to recognize Jesus Christ when he is right in front of them. The story raises so many questions!

I often wonder why the disciples were leaving Jerusalem in the first place. Are they making a run for it? Are they afraid that what happened to Jesus will happen to them next? It's a legitimate concern. Rome wasn't known for taking half measures. Were they so heartbroken that they fled? The hope that had turned these rag-tag men into disciples was suddenly gone. Everything that they had thought would change died when they watched Jesus die on that cross.

Needless to say, they have a lot going on in their lives. Which makes Cleopas' remark understandable: "*Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have happened there in these days?*" And it's right here that I find my biblical justification for sarcasm.

After they have invited the hidden Jesus to journey with them he once again does what Jesus does best; showing them the truth of God. The journey between Jerusalem was roughly 7 miles, which would have taken 4 hours if you were walking fast. I need to hand it to the disciples, I'm not sure if I could handle a 4 hour sermon while walking.

It's significant that they don't recognize Jesus until he breaks bread with them. One of the main themes in the Gospel of Luke is eating. The Gospel writer knows that it's at the table that important things happen. Again, Dr. Eric Barreto writes: "*For Luke, however, Jesus is most Jesus at a... table, at an ordinary meal infused with significance because of the people gathered around the food. Jesus is there at this table but so also all the sinners and tax collectors with whom Jesus shared meals. But not only that! Also at this table are the many powerful people with whom Jesus also dined. One of the most characteristic activities of Jesus' ministry in Luke is eating. He is accused early in the Gospel of being a glutton and a drunkard (7:34); worse, he eats with all the wrong people! So, it's instructive that it's not his teaching that opens their*

*eyes. It's not his presence. It's his sharing of bread with his friends. It's his blessing of food. In this sharing of bread at an ordinary table, we catch a glimpse of Jesus' transformative kingdom. In Luke, eating is a radical act because it breaks down cultural boundaries. In Luke, the resurrected Jesus shares that bread once again with his followers. And in feeding them, Jesus opens their eyes, helping them see that Jesus was with them the whole time."*

If we were in the sanctuary worshiping right now, I would point to the table where we would soon break bread together. But that's not possible right now. But there is something to be learned here too. Our distance away from not just communion with Christ, but communion with one another, whether it be at the communion rail or dinner with friends, has taught us the powerful message that Jesus already knew; God comes to us in a variety of ways, we just need to open our eyes to see. Amen.