

Burning Hearts “Emmaus Sunday”

Sermon for Easter 3

Acts 2:14a, 36-41

Psalm 116

1 Peter 1:17-25

Luke 24:13-36

Grace, Peace, and Mercy from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

You have walked that road, the road to Emmaus, just the two disappointed disciples that first Easter. You may be on that road today. Lots of questions without answers. Sadness, struggle, grief, doubt, despair...a hope that at one time burn bright as the sun has now been snuffed out. It's a hard road to walk.

You had plans, dreams, a future all mapped out, house, home, career. But it hasn't worked out as planned because of the changes and chances of life. With our HS seniors they were looking forward to graduations, and the celebrations that follow, but now all that is up in the air because of the this pandemic...They will graduate, but it won't be like last year's celebration. So...you walk burdened, heavy laden.

Spiritually, the fire that once burned has faded. At one time you were eager for every sermon and every Bible study, but that fire too has gone out. What has caused that to happen? Crisis in life and the church failed to respond? Doubts have crept into your life since you have heard the message of the world. The Church too is full of sinful people just like anyone in lives in this world? So you walk burdened and heavy laden...away from the community of faith. Walking away from the community of disciples, just like Cleopas and the other disciple. You have permission to insert your name as the disciple walking with Cleopas.

As these disciples walk the seven mile journey to Emmaus there is one thing on their mind. The Cross. The Crucifixion of the Jesus of Nazareth. The saw what had happened and compared it to what they had hoped for, and the only conclusion is: It is over. Done! The cross ruined it all! Now what?

That is surely the voice of unbelief. And that voice can overpower us, can it? It can fill our hearts and and our minds. It seems true. It makes an awful lot of sense. Except for this one thing. Crosses can be good. Maybe it was not what you had expected or what you had planned for even hoped for. But they can be a part of Good's good and gracious plan. That this not only happened to bring difficulty to life, but that is might show the power of God at work in your life. Yes, even through the cross and your crosses and difficulty and struggle.

Jesus joins these two on the road, but they don't recognize Him. “What are talking about?” “Have you not heard how Jesus of Nazareth who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed Him over to be condemned to death and crucified Him. We had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel....But we hear from some woman the He is risen from the dead.” We had hoped...It is done.

And Jesus comes to these two disciples, as He comes to us....But He keeps these two disciples from seeing Him as He is... The crucified and risen Jesus, who is victorious over sin, death and devil. They are kept from recognizing Him. Because Jesus has work to do. He needs to teach them. That His cross

was the good and gracious plan and work of God from the very beginning.

So Jesus opens up the Old testament and begins to beginning with Moses, and then going through all the prophets. See, God knew this was going to happen. I wonder what the content of Jesus' teaching was...

+ Remember how God put Adam in a deep sleep and open His side to pull out a rib to create for Him a bride? What a scar that must have left/ Recognize anything?

+ Remember how Isaac carried the wood that he himself would sacrificed by his own Father? Sound familiar?

+ Remember how Joseph was sold into slavery to Egypt by His own brothers and then forgave them, saying 'what you meant for evil God worked it for good so that an entire family would be saved? Does that ring any bells?

+ Remember Israel sacrificed the Passover Lamb, the Lamb without blemish and its blood placed on the door frame caused death to Passover them? See any connections?

+ Remember how David prayed in his distress, "My God, My God Why has thou forsaken me, a company of evil doers encircles me, they have pierced my hands and feet, they have divided my garments, and for my clothing they cast lots? How is your heart feeling now?

+ Remember what Isaiah prophesied, "Surely he has borne our grief and carried our sorrows; yet we accounted Him stricken, smitten by God. But He was wounded for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities, upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and by his stripes we are healed? Are your hearts really burning now?

As you can see it is all about Jesus. The entire OT testament points to Jesus. See this was the plan. The cross and the resurrection was a good thing. God used this evil to work His good and gracious will.

They listened, their hearts burned, but they didn't quite get it just yet. Because when you are on the road in the middle of struggle, you might hear the words, but belief is hard to come. **THINGS LOOK AND FEELS SO BAD. THE WORD OF GOD SOUNDS SO CONTRARY TO WHAT MAKES LOGICAL SENSE AND TO THE PRESENT REALITY.**

Here is what Easter teaches us. Here is what Jesus teaches us in the middle of this time of pandemic where we are not able to meet and gather in mass as the community of faith. God specializes in raising the dead. Even when all looks contrary God is just getting started. Through death God is bringing new life. It is God's go to pitch. It is the proclamation of Jesus death and resurrection in the middle of struggle, death and sin. It helps us to rely on God's Word, and not on ourselves. We will never be able to raise our selves for the dead. Only God can. Even in this time God is working all this out for Good.

Their hearts were burning. Burning hot enough to invite Jesus to stay with them at the house in Emmaus. They did and Jesus accepted. Then something interesting happens, Jesus the guest becomes the host. When they were at table Jesus took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. Then they recognized Him then Jesus vanished.

Was it the Lord's Supper? Probably not. But the we Luke writes it sure makes us think that way. For us