

*Gospel Reading: Luke 24:13-35*

<sup>13</sup>Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles<sup>[a]</sup> from Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup>and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. <sup>15</sup>While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, <sup>16</sup>but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup>And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>18</sup>Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" <sup>19</sup>He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth,<sup>[c]</sup> who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, <sup>20</sup>and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. <sup>21</sup>But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.<sup>[d]</sup> Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. <sup>22</sup>Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. <sup>24</sup>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." <sup>25</sup>Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Messiah<sup>[e]</sup> should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" <sup>27</sup>Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

<sup>28</sup>As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. <sup>29</sup>But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. <sup>30</sup>When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. <sup>31</sup>Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. <sup>32</sup>They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us<sup>[f]</sup> while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" <sup>33</sup>That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. <sup>34</sup>They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" <sup>35</sup>Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

This is word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

### ***“There all Along”***

*Have you ever had one of those weeks where you just seem to lose everything...your keys, your shoes, your glasses? Well, this week was one of those weeks for me. Most critically, I lost my cell phone. Like so many people, my phone is somewhat of a lifeline. At least it seems that way. I need it in my business and personal life, anymore. I need it to stay connected to my family and my church family, to make appointments and keep my schedule, to find my way with its maps, to pay for things with its financial apps. So, of course, when it came up missing, I looked everywhere for it....under the chair, in between the cushions, in my purse, in the car, under its seats. I was considering driving back to where I'd been that morning when suddenly it buzzed! It buzzed. It buzzed from the location of my back pocket! Oh, goodness. It had been with me all along. I just wasn't even thinking of it being there. I guess you could say it was out of context. But nevertheless, it had been with me all along.*

Well, the followers of Jesus, Cleopas and his friend (we don't know who he or she was), eventually concluded the same of Jesus. Initially they didn't, however. In fact, Luke writes that they were walking down the road to Emmaus, possibly escaping the chaos and confusion, chiefly because they knew Jesus was gone. They were in conversation, discussing what had happened over the last three days. They were very sad. Likely their heads were down, feet just kicking the dust, eyes puffy from crying.<sup>1</sup> They were sharing their heartache. Jesus, the One they'd thought, really thought, was the Messiah, the mighty liberator who'd begin a social and political revolution for the people Israel, was gone!<sup>2</sup> He'd been shamefully crucified near the city dump as a common criminal. How could they have been so wrong? And how it now hurt to have hopes shattered and promises broken.

Now, the story goes that Jesus came alongside of them in their walk. But to them he appeared as a stranger. They didn't recognize him. The person they'd followed for years, they did not know. They did not know him.

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard Voelz. "A23: The Third Sunday of Easter, Year A (2017)." <https://asermonforeversunday.com/sermons/a22-third-sunday-easter-year/>. (accessed 4-21-23).

<sup>2</sup> Richard Voelz.

Now...you have to stop here and let yourself wonder a little about this. Why didn't they know him? The text doesn't say that Jesus was in disguise. It just says, "*Their eyes were kept from recognizing him.*" How so? Was Jesus playing tricks on them? No, but, maybe it was just that they were too sad to allow their minds to think of anything else. Blinded by their grief they were. Or maybe it was that Jesus was out of context. The Jesus they remembered was crucified. They knew a dead Jesus. A risen Jesus was not what they expected, out of context...somewhat like the phone in my back pocket.<sup>3</sup>

Regardless, Jesus asked them to explain what they were talking about. While shocked, absolutely shocked, that he did not know all the recent happenings, Cleopas and his friend patiently told him the story of disappointment, at the core of which was his absence. Jesus listened to them as they poured out their broken hearts and spilled their shattered dreams. He also listened as they mentioned, but disregarded, the rumors that the tomb in which he had been buried was empty and that he was alive.

Jesus then called them to remember their own Scripture which predicted that the Messiah would have to die to then save. And he proceeded to tell the story, the bigger story of which they were a part, starting at the very beginning and continuing through the prophets and proverbs. As they listened, a light came on inside of them, and their hearts burned! As Kristin Adkins-Whitesides says, "*They began to be warmed all the way through, tingling down to their fingers and setting their hair on end. It was like something they hadn't felt in ages. Something a little bit like hope.*"<sup>4</sup>

Once they arrived in Emmaus, the disciples didn't want to let their walking guest go, and they asked him to stay with them. They all sat down for a meal together and....suddenly THE GUEST BECAME THE HOST! The Table became his, and he invited them to join him, as he had hundreds of times before. Jesus picked up the bread and he broke it. And as they reached out to receive it, their eyes were opened. "*Their eyes that once were clouded with tears were*

---

<sup>3</sup>Donovan Drake. "Gaining Recognition". [https://day1.org/weekly-broadcast/5d9b820ef71918cdf2002683/gaining\\_recognition](https://day1.org/weekly-broadcast/5d9b820ef71918cdf2002683/gaining_recognition). (accessed 4-21-23).

<sup>4</sup>Kristin Adkins-Whitesides. "Missing Easter" [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtcZoGSE5Tef817sEGH\\_uiw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtcZoGSE5Tef817sEGH_uiw) (accessed 4-21-20).

*now opened to the realities of the resurrection.*”<sup>5</sup> They recognized him. It was Jesus. It was the MESSIAH. Although things were certainly different now, he was still with them. He was on the road with them. He’d been **there all along**.

You know, all of us have walked our own roads to Emmaus when relationships have been torn apart, when jobs or other opportunities have fallen through, when long awaited plans have had to be abandoned, when dreams have been shattered and promises to us broken. Possibly even now, you are walking to Emmaus, feeling hopeless, sad, overwhelmed with the bad news that swirls around us each day, and certainly there’s plenty of THAT. Possibly, you are grieving the loss of a friend, worrying over the decision that is pending at work or school. Possibly you are just tired, sick and tired, of the daily grind. of being sad. Right. I get it.

And what’s more, we, we, we know what it is like to have the brightness of the Easter morning Sanctuary and the scent of the Easter lilies fade a mile or two down the road. We KNOW about love, grace, forgiveness, and new life. We HAVE the words of the angels and the story of new life in our hands. Yet we can find ourselves not recognizing the realities of the resurrection around us. We too hang our heads, look sadly at each other, and kick the dust with our feet. As Rev. Dr. Donovan Drake says, *“It does not take long before the Easter trumpet transitions into the car horn blasting at that crazy driver who cut in front of us. We soon get caught in the traffic of this world, between the hard realities of what we see and what we know.”*<sup>6</sup>

Well, brothers and sisters, today, the Spirit is calling us...calling us to read this text, to stop and to engage the One who is walking alongside us! He is here to listen as we pour out hearts. He will listen to us tell him of our sadness, confusion, anger, despair and weariness. And he will respond by reminding us of the bigger story, God’s salvation story, the one of which we are a part.<sup>7</sup> He will remind us that we have a God whose nature has, from the very beginning,

---

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Harmon. *“Breaking” Easter 3 (A)*. <https://episcopalchurch.org/lectionary/easter-3a> (accessed 4-21-2020)

<sup>6</sup> Donovan Drake.

<sup>7</sup> Jill Duffield. *“Looking into the Lectionary. 3rd Sunday of Easter”* <https://pres-outlook.org/category/ministry-resources/looking-into-the-lectionary/> (accessed 4-22-2020).

been to seek out a relationship with us, most especially through God's Son, the One who has come to share our lives and lots, including our suffering and sinfulness, our pains and sorrows. He will remind us that the Son has thus gone to the very depths on our behalf so that we would know that there is no place of sadness, confusion, anger, despair and weariness that is too great to be outside his salvific reach. He will remind us that the Son has been raised to live again so that...so that we too may live...so that we may be uplifted by the promise that God's light is more powerful than darkness, and so that we may know that God's love is stronger than hate, and that the new life offered us prevails over all things, even death itself.

And what we will find when we do this is that *"our eyes that once were clouded with tears will be opened to the realities of the resurrection around us"*. We will see lives turn around, addicts come clean, the lost find their way, the terminally ill suddenly find a cure, the disenfranchised find homes, deeply broken relationships reconciled, and grassroots movements achieve justice long silenced. The sun will shine and we will no longer be sad.

SO friends, let's do it. Let's look around and see who it is that walks with us. It is Jesus, the risen and living Lord. It is he. Jesus is with us. And how our hearts will burn within us when we hear, really hear his words. How grateful we will be as he set us afire with a hope. And how amazing it will be when we recognize **that he, well, that he, has been there all along**. He has been there all along. Amen. Amen.

a