

Engaging through Breaking Bread
April 26, 2020 Easter 3

Luke 24: 13-35

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This week when I was taking out our recycling bin to the curb, one of our neighbours from across the bay was driving by and stopped to chat. Usually he would wave and smile and carry on, but this was the first time we'd seen each other out of our house since the pandemic started and he wanted to check in on how we were doing. He was going to the office because he really needed to get some work done and with two small children it is a bit of a challenge. He talked about how he was slowly reclaiming his office from the toys that had overtaken it before he had to work at home. The challenges of our present time. We entered into this conversation at a deeper level than would have otherwise been the case. This time invites a deeper engagement with our neighbours, with one another.

Jesus entered into a deeper engagement with the travellers on the road. They were travelling away from Jerusalem, bewildered by what had happened and perhaps no longer able to cope with being in the city, being fearful, so they left. As they walk they are talking about all that had happened and what they were feeling about it all, probably wondering how on earth it could have happened. Jesus catches up with them and then kept pace with them. He was a stranger to them as for some reason they were kept from recognizing him. Maybe because if they did, the conversation they were able to have would not have taken place. He entered the conversation where they were, asking them what they were talking about as they walked along. By doing so he builds trust which moves toward intimacy. He is meeting them where they are at, not bringing in any agenda he may have.

It is as we build trust in community that we are able to have the deeper conversations. It is a deep need in our communities, not just now but always. This was identified in our Craft/study group this week, that we can have deep conversations in this group as well as at Film and Faith, but in most of our church interactions, especially on Sunday morning this is not the case. I identified that it is in the small groups that there is an opportunity for trust to be built which enables these types of conversations to take place. We need more of these opportunities created in our ministry together.

As the three in our story continue to talk, Jesus explains to them that it was necessary for the messiah to suffer and be glorified. His suffering and resurrection turns on its head the powers of violence and control. He shows a totally new way of being and living. God show us that Love wins. That God is with us in our suffering, and God's love is more powerful than any violence or power. When have you experienced Christ with you in your suffering or struggles?

Jesus welcomes the loving hospitality of the two travellers and then reveals himself in the breaking of the bread. In sharing bread together, hospitality, companionship and solidarity are revealed. Their eyes are opened to Christ's presence with them. When have your eyes been opened to the Christ in your midst? In the ordinary and everyday occurrences of life? We can experience Christ in the support we experience when we are suffering, as well as in the hospitality received from others.

As we think about hospitality and look to things opening up here in Saskatchewan, we are to be mindful of who we will welcome into our homes. We are to limit it to only 2 or 3 other households, up to a maximum of 10 people in total, over this present phase, so we are not bringing a different group of people into our homes every week. This is so we can track any infections which still may occur. So, as we look forward to welcoming family and friends into our homes again, who is important for you to see and be with?

I invite us into some time in break out rooms for conversation about what is stirring in you from this story. Suggested questions are:

1. When have your eyes been opened to the presence of Christ in your midst in the ordinary everyday occurrences of life?
2. Who are the significant people in your life (up to 10) that you will welcome into your home to provide hospitality to?

If you are in the breakout room and need help, go to 'more' on your menu, and click 'ask for help' and Brian will come in and help. If you do not wish to participate, turn off your camera and mute yourself and people will know that you just wish to listen. If your camera is off and/or you are muted but don't want to be, ask for help. If you find yourself in a group where most are muted with no camera, return to the main room to be reassigned. You will also be asked if there is anything from your groups you wish to share when we come back

Share insights and thoughts from groups

May we be open to the Christ entering our lives through deep conversations, breaking of bread together, and giving and receiving of hospitality. As we move into a new phase of this pandemic, may we do so with care, love, and grace.