

**“Holy Heart-Burn”**  
**Sermon Notes – April 26**  
**(Luke 24:13-35)**

Have you ever felt you had to get away – you needed to sort through your thoughts and feelings? Maybe you lost someone dear to you to death or lost a job, or experienced a broken relationship, or had a dream shattered? Then you know what Cleopas and his companion were experiencing when they left the city of Jerusalem to go to Emmaus on Easter Sunday. They were experiencing grief, sadness, disappointment, brokenness and confusion. You see, their teacher and leader, Jesus, had died. He had given them evidence of God’s power at work in him – through his powerful preaching, his healing miracles, and his mastery over nature (the wind and the waves). They had **hoped** he was the Messiah sent to redeem the nation of Israel from Roman oppression. But, now they had witnessed his arrest and his crucifixion (death on a cross like a common criminal), and with Jesus’ death their dreams and hopes for Israel and themselves were shattered. Jerusalem for them now represented a place of pain and sorrow – unmet goals and expectations. So, they left on Easter Sunday for Emmaus – even though they heard that some women followers of Jesus had seen the empty tomb and had even seen the resurrected Christ. Keep in mind they didn’t know whether what those women said was true or just wishful thinking or rumors. (After all, women in that day were not considered valuable, viable witnesses.)

But I want you to notice what happens in the Gospel story. As they walk the path to Emmaus (7 miles from Jerusalem), a stranger appears beside them. It is Jesus, the Resurrected Christ, but they are prevented from recognizing him at that time. He asks about the conversation they were having and they proceed to ask if he is the only visitor in Jerusalem that doesn’t know what’s been happening over the last few days. They tell him about their leader and Rabbi, Jesus, and how he was arrested, tried, condemned to death, and crucified on a cross, and how they hoped he was the Messiah meant to redeem Israel. The stranger (Jesus) begins to

explain the Old Testament scriptures and what the prophets said about the Messiah – the suffering servant of God.

They enjoy his company so much that by the time they get to Emmaus, they invite him to stay the night with them. (Maybe they had more questions, maybe there was something about his Presence that was different and they knew, but they could not quite know that it was Jesus – we don't really know.)

As they sat down for the evening meal, the stranger (the Resurrected Jesus) took the bread, blessed it, and gave it to them. The scriptures say at that moment their eyes were opened – it was Jesus – the Resurrected Christ – and then He vanished as quickly as He appeared on the roadside. They said, “Didn’t our hearts burn as He talked to us about the scriptures on the road to Emmaus?” (I call this “Holy Heart-burn” – when your hearts are warmed, inspired, set on fire.)

As we reflect upon the Gospel story today, I want you to see four things:

- 1. Jesus came to them incognito – as a stranger. Jesus sometimes comes to us in the voice of a friend or a stranger or a person in need.**

Many years ago when I was living in Concord, I had a brother who committed suicide. That is a terrible loss for any family and difficult to cope with. I, too, even as an Associate Minister at that time, had a difficult time coping with Gary’s death. The first Easter after his death, I was really struggling and needed a friend – just to listen, to pray with, to cry with me. (Many think we ministers have it all together, but we don’t – we hurt and question too.) I prayed all that day for God to send someone to my home. About 9:00pm that night my doorbell rang and I looked out the peep hole in the door to see a friend I hadn’t seen in several weeks. She proceeded to tell me that God had brought my name to her mind three times that day and she couldn’t go home that night until she came by my house. We did talk, cry, and pray together. I didn’t tell her that

night, but later I said “God in the flesh” - came to me that night with words of comfort, love, and hope. That’s what Jesus (as the stranger) did for Cleopas and his companion. Sometimes Jesus comes to you and me in the voice of a stranger or a friend.

2. **Secondly, I want you to notice that Jesus walks and talks with us.**

He came alongside them in their grief, loss, hopelessness, and confusion and listened and then talked and guided them. Sometimes we forget when we pray - that it’s a two-way street - we talk and share, but God also wants us to listen and be guided and comforted by Him. What’s the part in the song, “In the Garden”? - He walks with me and talks with me and tells me I am his own.

3. **Third, notice how Jesus revealed Himself to them as followers - through something as ordinary as mealtime - in the breaking and blessing of bread (The Lord’s Supper).** Jesus knew they would remember what he taught them about remembering Him - the bread (his body given for them), the cup (His blood for the forgiveness of their sins). And then He disappeared from them. As the Resurrected Christ, He could appear and disappear and He did.

*Today, Jesus often reveals something about Himself and our relationship to Him in a prayer, a song, a rainbow, the breaking of bread, etc. Some people would call these “AHA” moments!*

4. **Fourth, I hope you’ll see that Jesus never pushes Himself onto us.**

He comes when we open our minds and hearts to Him. Did you see in this gospel story that when they got to Emmaus, the stranger (Jesus) started to walk away, but they said to him, “the day is spent and it is dark, come and stay with us.” Jesus graciously went with them and explained more of the scriptures as to who He was. *The scriptures teach us that when we seek with our whole hearts, we will find and know Jesus.*

Last, I remind you that with “**Holy Heart-burn**” - **hearts on fire** - **passionately** - they left Emmaus to go back to Jerusalem to tell other

disciples – “we have seen the Risen Christ!” *They went back with hope restored and their faith renewed.* Sometimes, you and I, need our faith renewed and our hopes restored. We need our hearts stirred and “on fire” – living passionately for God. *How long has it been since your heart was stirred or warmed or moved by the Spirit of God? When our faith is strong and we are filled with the hope of Christ, we can share with others and strengthen them in their difficulties.*

May you know that Jesus desires to walk and talk alongside you. Sometimes He will come to you in the voice of a stranger or a friend of a needy person. Sometimes your “AHA” moments may come in something simple – like the breaking of bread or a song or a nature walk, etc. Most of all, may you know that Jesus (the Resurrected Christ) is into transforming despair to hope and bringing restoration and healing in our brokenness. ***May you go with “Holy Heart-burn” – the fire of God’s Spirit - in your soul.*** Amen.