

“A Quiet Resurrection”

Luke 24:13-35

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Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. 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?” He asked them, “What things?” They replied, “The things about 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. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 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. 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.” Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 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. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was

talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” 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 the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

This is a familiar road, the road to Emmaus. We have walked this road before. We know the steps, the sights, and the sounds of this road. We have been here before and we will certainly be back again. This is the road of broken hopes, the road to Emmaus. The road where we speak the words with the disciples, “But we had hoped...” But we had hoped that... The sickness wouldn’t spread, the job wouldn’t be lost, the addiction would be conquered, the money would come through, that our candidate would win, that the pandemic would be over by now, that our prayers would be answered, that our faith would be stronger.

These words that we speak on the road to Emmaus, the hopes and dreams lost to us, are filled with pain and disappointment and heartache. Cleopas and the unnamed disciple speak these words on the road to Emmaus in our text for today, “But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.” Jesus for all they know is dead, the one who they had pinned all their hopes to, the one who promises God’s reign on earth. Their hopes and dreams have been dashed and killed. And on top of

all that some of the women and men who followed Jesus are delirious saying that Jesus is alive. It appears that their Savior is dead and their close friends are losing their minds, they had hoped for so much more.

Surprisingly, this is an Easter story. But not the normal Easter morning story of trumpets and lillies. This is the Easter evening story. When we are walking home, having trouble believing the resurrection, believing that hope can somehow be alive. It can be difficult to recognize the risen Christ in our lives.

In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic this story gives us a sacred roadmap for our journey. The road to Emmaus, the road of failure and disappointment, is a sacred road. Hope is possible even if not yet recognized. For Jesus walks this road with us.

And it is here that something stands out to me. The resurrection that the Marys witnessed at the tomb with earthquakes and lightning and angels is not the only way to experience resurrection. Cleopas and the other unnamed disciple experience what I have heard called a quiet resurrection. Jesus, the same Jesus who was betrayed by his religion, tortured and executed by his government, abandoned by his closest friends, does not return with vengeance like we might expect or hope. Sometimes I want Jesus to flip over some more tables and yell at the people who I think are wrong. But Jesus did not appear to the Sanhedrin or Pilate to prove

that he was right and they were wrong. Jesus did not write words in the sky to prove his existence as the Son of God. No, instead, Jesus takes a walk with his disciples.

And I have to admit that this is not always the post resurrection Jesus that I have hoped for. I have hoped for something more dramatic, something more convincing. I have hoped that post Easter faith would be easier. I want Jesus to make all the technology work perfect during Zoom meetings. I want Jesus to make an obvious cure to the pandemic and bring all the public officials that I think are best into office. But that is part of the Emmaus road experience, the disappointment of the quiet resurrection, the disappointment of God's subtlety.

But this is so much a part of being human, even if we try and avoid it at all costs. The disappointments of not being perfect, of not making everyone happy, of falling short of our goal. We are not perfect, we are broken. And Jesus still decides to walk alongside us on the path. Jesus asks questions of us to hear what we are experiencing, Jesus listens and prompts to get the whole story, all the feelings, all the fears, all the dashed hopes.

And it is at this crossroads where Jesus gives us the option to continue with him or to leave the path. Our text shows Jesus going further but the disciples whose hearts were burning within them ask for Jesus to stay with them. Jesus does not

force his presence on them but lets them decide. When we are hurt and disappointed and feeling extra broken, Jesus comes right alongside of us, listens, shares memories of hope and inspiration, and then gives us a choice to continue with or without him.

In the quiet moments, on the walks of life, Jesus may come and walk with us and we may not recognize it. These moments are not forced on you but you are always given a chance to invite Jesus over for dinner.

What does this mean for us today? It means that Jesus is present in the text or card sent to a lonely neighbor. It means that Jesus breaks bread with us as we join zoom worship and zoom events together even as the technology doesn't work perfectly and it leaves us longing for the feeling of being together in person. Jesus is the stranger you pass on your walk who has given you a wide berth and is wearing a protective mask. Jesus meets us in the moments where we are working with our children who feel so pent up, when we engage our families from far away over the phone, or when we push through the technology to meet with our church family.

We had hoped things would be different. And yet Jesus still manages to meet us in quarantine, through our protective masks, past our fear and isolation. So keep walking on this road of faith. In the quiet of the resurrection, in the midst of

lost hope and broken dreams, Jesus still comes to us offering hope and relationship and resurrection. Will you invite Jesus to stay with you awhile longer? Will you accept the humility of a Jesus who goes for walks just to be with you? Will you receive the bread as a gift of new life even when everything around seems to be broken? Jesus is here. Jesus is listening and walking with you. Take these moments in your day to slow down and ask Jesus to stay and perhaps then we will be transformed, filled with joy, running to share our good news. Perhaps in those common moments of grace, we will finally recognize that Jesus is with us. Amen.