

Sermon for April 26, 2020
Road to Emmaus

Cleopas and another disciple were on their way to Emmaus. Now, we don't know much about Cleopas or this other disciple. So, just for fun, I'm going to invite you to enter this story and say your name and another disciple. Like, "Michael and another disciple were on their way to Emmaus."

We're not sure why the disciples, or why we, were on our way to Emmaus. Maybe we're heading to Emmaus because we just watched Jesus be crucified and die and now...we're afraid. Or, maybe we are heading back to Emmaus because we just want things to go back to the way they use to be, before all this terrible news entered our reality. Maybe, we're hoping things could go back to normal, the normal before all this STUFF happened.

Then, as we're walking back to Emmaus, as we're reminiscing on all that had happened, a "stranger" shows up. But actually, it's Jesus who shows up and walks with us...like Jesus does. But, we don't recognize him. To us, he's some stranger walking the same road.

Now, we don't know why we can't recognize Jesus. Maybe it's because we are so deep in sadness and grief, that we can't recognize Jesus. Or, maybe we just never would expect Jesus to be with us. I mean, the last we saw him, he was being laid in a tomb, dead. So, why would we recognize him? Or...maybe he was wearing a mask, like we do these days?

Then, Jesus asks us a question, "What are you talking about?" Jesus wants to know what's going on in our lives. So, after this stranger...Jesus, asks us what we're talking about, we respond. "Are you the only one that doesn't know what's been happening around here?" We ask this stranger, who's Jesus, if he's the only one that doesn't know what's been going on. Then we continue and tell this "stranger"/Jesus, everything about Jesus and everything that happened to him.

He was this remarkable man, even a prophet. We thought Jesus was going to be our savior. And then our leaders turned him over to be crucified. We watched him die and laid in a tomb. Now, our hope is lost. We had hoped that he was the one who would redeem Israel. We thought for sure that Jesus was the one we've been waiting for.

Then this stranger Jesus pipes up. "Wait a minute you fools." A little harsh for a stranger, don't you think...even for Jesus. "Isn't this the way it was supposed to be? Isn't this what the scriptures told us would happen?" And then Jesus goes on and reveals everything about HIMSELF, from the scriptures, starting with Moses and on through the prophets. Even after that, we still didn't recognize Jesus.

As we arrived at our destination, we noticed that this stranger who had been walking with us, yes, I know, "Jesus", seemed like he was going to continue on. But we invited him to stay with us. Maybe journeying with Jesus for a while rubs off on us. I mean, this was a stranger to us

and we invited him to stay with us. A stranger, we invited to stay with us. Hmm...sounds like a Jesus thing, doesn't it? At the time though, we didn't have a clue that this was Jesus.

When we entered the place we were staying, it was time to eat and so we prepared a meal...it was just an ordinary meal we had had many times before. We got everything ready and then a remarkable thing happened. This stranger that we had invited to stay with us, took the bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to us.

Then...everything changed. This was Jesus with us! It was Jesus all along. Jesus was walking with us the entire way. Jesus invited us to remember what the scriptures told us. Jesus asked us what was going on with us. And it was Jesus that joined us.

And just like that, he disappeared.

Sisters and Brothers in Christ, believe me, Jesus is alive and with us. The resurrected one, walks with us, cares for us and is with us in our own homes. This is the Promised Resurrection, here and now.

The next time you are having a regular, ordinary meal, know that Jesus is right there with you, in your home, in your hopelessness, in your sadness and in your desire to go back to the way things were before. Know that Jesus is blessing your meal and giving it to you as the Promised Resurrection. And when you see that, there is no going back to the old normal. We have entered the Promised Resurrection, here and now.

Thanks be to God.