

## Luke 24:13-35 Emmaus Easter 3A 2020

Let's imagine for a minute what it must have been like for these two disciples.

Really put ourselves in their place.

We may certainly assume that for all their lives, they'd been living in quiet desperation – perhaps from living in grinding poverty, from constantly wondering

if they'd have enough to eat, perhaps of lack of freedom

from being held under the oppressive rule of outside powers for so, so long.

All these things might very well have made them disillusioned about their core religious beliefs

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where was God, anyway, in lives such as theirs?

They had perhaps lived without hope of the promises of their religion.

Then, when this wandering prophet came along, teaching what sounded so much like what they'd been longing for, and healing so many, hope flooded back.

They'd given up their homes, families, life as they knew it, to follow this wanderer.

They had let themselves believe that this was their messiah.

But, instead of a savior, he'd turned out to be crucified as a common criminal.

He was dead, and their hopes collapsed.

This was not the messiah they'd been promised, after all. Now what?

These friends were making their way from one place –

a place of hope-turned-into-despair, of questions – to another place: Emmaus.

They would be heading back to the usual, back to regular life of families and jobs.

Disillusioned but maybe even looking forward to the peace of the normal.

Many of us must share that desire for the peace of the normal.

We may try to cope by seeking a place of escape from our four walls,

but even if we find one, solitude is the requirement these days.

It's interesting to try to name what we feel and seek. Perhaps we're we lonely.

I know I miss specific relationships and interactions.

This can be a time of focusing on connection with God,

but with other human interactions missing, it seems a little bit unsatisfying.

And, what is the connection between our relationships with others and that with God?

We may long for hope, and confidence and trust that God is, indeed, in charge.  
 We need to be reminded that God has always and will continue to love us and support us.  
 The road to God and Christ is often, indeed, our own road to Emmaus.

We could focus our attention on the correlation between the Emmaus story and our worship.  
 Like the first part of those disciples' journey that day,  
 we spend the first half of our worship in hearing and learning about the scriptures.  
 On a good day, we really hear them.  
 We're inspired by them, invigorated by hope and grace and blessing.  
 Maybe our hearts are even 'burning within us,' just like those two friends of so long ago.

Then, in the second part of our Liturgy, we come to the table to know the risen Christ  
 in the breaking of the bread.  
 It's so clear that this story is the structural and theoretical basis of our worship.  
 Each Sunday is our own road to Emmaus.  
 But during these times, we're not having that meal together.  
 Let's ask ourselves: what part of this story isn't part of our worship?

The disciples **were kept** from recognizing Jesus when they were walking  
 and hearing him explain the scriptures to them.  
 Their hearts burned, but still they were kept from knowing him.  
 When they reached Emmaus, Jesus kept on going.  
 Unless they'd invited the stranger to share their meal and their home,  
 they would not have been able to recognize him.  
**Only after reaching out to the stranger** could they know Jesus in the breaking of bread.

That's what is so hard during our time of separation.  
 We know Jesus in each other. In these times when we can't meet with others for a meal,  
 especially for that spiritual meal we share each week, our lives seem a bit empty.  
 And, as those disciples reached out to the risen Christ,  
 we find ourselves prevented from much of our acting to help each other.  
 Our relationship with the eternal Christ is so essentially relationship.

Here's something interesting. I'm reading a book by Richard Rohr called *The Universal Christ*.  
 He suggests that Christ, the eternal Word, is present since creation in everything.

So, when we walk in the forest and feel the presence of Christ, it's scriptural.

May I suggest that this may be a time to focus on finding the Christ in everything.

Our loved ones, of course, but what if the eternal creative word is there in our beloved pets, in the trees and spring flowers and the lakes.

From isolation to community – the risen Christ is always with us in our life's journey.

Next time you wonder where he is, I invite you to reach out to someone, or take a walk and find him wherever you are.

The good news today is that we can and will know Christ not only in relationship with each other. Find him all around you. Feel him.

The gospels teach us of a ever-outwardly-spiraling Christ, transforming us in ways we can only imagine. Imagine, just imagine!