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St. Paul's Lutheran Church
2100 16th Street SW
Austin, MN 55912-1749
Pastor Ted Barthels
Sermon preached on
April 23, 2023
2nd Sunday after Easter
(Previously preached on April 26,2020)

Scripture Lessons: Acts 2:14a, 36-47, 1 Peter 1:17-21

Hymns: 192:1-5; 190; 205; 207:2

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Sermon Text: Luke 24:13-35

Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.

¹⁷ And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?"

So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. ²² Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. ²³ When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. ²⁴ And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

²⁵ Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and

all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

³² And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" ³³ So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread. (NKJV)

This is the Word of God.

Sanctify us, oh Lord, through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

In Christ Jesus, our crucified and risen Savior, dear fellow Redeemed:

INTRO: What's going on?

We are only human. Because of that it happens all too often that things in life don't go the way we had it all laid out in our minds. We have a vision for what we think life is going to be, and then something happens. It seems like it came right out of the blue! There's an accident. Someone gets sick. One day we go to work only to find that the job is gone. What's going on? I don't understand!

In our current events with the early outbreak of severe weather, many Americans have suffered great loss of property, and some loss of life! At the same time, we have suffered in our country an outbreak of violence, people robbing from stores like its their right to take anything they want, and then resell it on the internet. It seems that state and federal government are serving as a force for promoting evil rather than promoting morality. Sadly, there have been too many senseless killings across the nation. In recent days,

a young teen age boy sent to bring his younger brother home for supper, knocked on the wrong neighbor's door and was shot to death. In a small southern town, a mother threw a sweet sixteen birthday party for her daughter, in a small town, and it was targeted by a group of teens with guns, for no reason at all. Four were killed and several others wounded. Lives are turned upside down and filled with bitter disappointment and grief. It's like our world is being turned upside down!

Now, let's pause and remember that we are not the first to experience our worlds being turned upside down, and our feelings of certainty suddenly turning to uncertainty. That is exactly what the two disciples walking the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus were experiencing. **And they were disciples.** The word wasn't being used quite yet then, but they were Christians who had put their faith and confidence in Jesus as the Christ who had come into the world. And yet there they were completely messed up and forlorn because over the past few days everything was turned upside down and then some. They needed what we also need, a good solid dose of --

THEME: Resurrection Enlightenment.

We see in the Emmaus disciples --

I. The Failing of a Worldly Perspective.

They had all the facts, but they didn't have the truth. Can you picture the scene? These two men, disciples very familiar with the Lord Jesus and with His teachings, were in a very somber discussion about the events of the past three days. It was late Sunday, and they had a long walk to their lodgings. Jerusalem and all the surrounding towns were filled to capacity because this was the Passover festival.

Remember the focus of that Passover meal was the lamb, that pure spotless lamb whose blood had to be offered at the temple. That lamb represented Jesus who was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. But that wasn't what they were talking about. No, oh no, they were talking about how Jesus had been arrested and condemned and crucified, and how could this have happened to their Jesus when they had such high expectations for Jesus?!

This is what they were talking about when Jesus walked up to them and joined them, BUT hid His identity from them. When He asked what they were talking about, they gave a broad answer, the things that had happened in Jerusalem. When Jesus asked, “What things?” they gave the thumbnail synopsis of why they were so distressed when they had those high expectations of Jesus. (Actually, they had some very low expectations for Jesus, some very earth centered expectations that were limited to their worldly experiences in life.) They reported to Jesus the facts about His own death and burial, and then that some of the women in their group claimed that they saw a vision of angels. -- You know they actually saw angels; that these men even used the word “vision” already shows their dismissal of what the women had to say regarding Jesus having risen! It didn’t fit their narrative, their experience, their worldly perspective.

What’s going on in your life? Are you having trouble tracking current events with the gospel of a crucified and risen Savior? Are you not even seeing how the one impacts our response to the other, or is the Pastor just talking about two completely different things and the one has nothing to do with the other? After all, the one is just church, and the other is real, very real and really messed up! Our worldly perspective, our human world view may darken our understanding of the truth about Jesus. It is too easy to feel that things are out of control because they are out of **our** control, and not going the way **we** think things ought to be going.

I know that we all understand that Jesus rose from the dead, and that we understand that this is the best news of all news ever to be told in this world. However, we are human, and so we have this human failing of struggling with an earthbound perspective that darkens our understanding. What we see in this world all too easily overwhelms the spiritual realities that we have learned from the Lord in Scripture.

Let’s rejoin these two disciples on their walk with Jesus. May we also be blessed as they were with a --

II. Scriptural Perspective for Current Events.

Jesus heard them out. They expressed their distress to the Lord, and then the Lord Jesus replied.

Luke 24:25-27 Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?” ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

Yes, Jesus began with a light reprimand. I am quite sure that with those words of reprimand He got their attention. Jesus took them into the Old Testament Scriptures to make the point that all they had witnessed in those recent days was exactly what the Scriptures had said would come. The Christ came into the world to suffer for our sins, and that was how He would enter into His glory. Starting with Moses and going on into the prophets Jesus taught them about Himself. The Spirit does not reveal for us which Scripture verses Jesus used. It was long walk and there are plenty from which the Savior could choose. Maybe He started with Moses. He could have very easily started with the Passover which the Jews were observing at the same time that these things were fulfilled in Christ. Jesus could have taken them through Isaiah 53, like we did during Lent this year. It includes it all: Jesus’ suffering and dying for our sins, and the fact of His resurrection, that He would see His spiritual progeny. The Psalms that we have read in our recent services are rich with lessons concerning Jesus’ sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection!

What Jesus was doing was shifting their focus, changing their perspective from a worldly view of events to a Scripture centered worldview, from a temporal focus to an eternal focus. The one is so much more real than the other. And it is not the earthly that is more real, it is the heavenly that is more real. Jesus was bringing these two disciples to the point that they could see things as the Apostle Paul wrote: “*We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*” (2 Corinthians 4:18)

That is what Jesus' resurrection does for us. Yes, Jesus died for us on the cross and He was buried, but on the third day He rose again. The debt of sin is paid. The curse of the law is removed. The devil's accusations now ring hollow for there is no longer any substance to them! Jesus' resurrection presents God's declaration of the peace of sins forgiven, and the grave losing its sting.

Here is life! Here is eternal life for all who believe. Remember Jesus' words to Martha as she grieved over the death of her brother: "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. ²⁶ And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*" (John 11:25-26)

That final question to Martha was an intentional call to a spiritual focus when the temporal events before her were overwhelming eternal truth. "**Do you believe this?**" Now, Jesus is asking you: "Do **you** believe this?" and yes, we will join Martha in her confession of faith: "*Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world.*" (John 11:27) We confess this with the spiritual enlightenment of Jesus' resurrection!

Again, we join the Emmaus disciples as --

III. They Reached their Goal.

Yes, they made it to their residence in Emmaus, but that wasn't the goal Jesus had for them. They invited this man to stay with them, still not recognizing that it was the Lord. It was when they sat down to eat and Jesus who had taught them along the road took the loaf of flat bread and said the table prayer, and began to break it in pieces to serve them that their eyes were opened and they knew it was the Lord Jesus, their risen Savior! And just that quick, Jesus removed Himself from their presence, His mission of grace and enlightenment accomplished.

How blessed they were to have their spiritual vision opened in this way! Jesus not only appeared to them but took the time and had the patience and the grace to open the Scriptures to them that they might finally have that Scriptural perspective, that true and eternal spiritual foundation for faith and life, and LIFE! And what a difference it made. When they had started for Emmaus, they had been dismayed and spiritually confounded. With their

understanding opened they were filled with the joy and excitement of knowing a living hope in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

It was far too late to start a seven mile walk back to Jerusalem, but this news couldn't wait! This was news that had to be shared with those whom they knew also were spiritually distressed. They hurried back to Jerusalem. When they arrived, they found the others also excited to tell them; "*THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED, and has appeared to Simon.*" (v. 34) And their immediate reply was to tell about "*the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.*" (Luke 24:34,35)

Are we living in that joy that comes with resurrection enlightenment? We are living in strange and unsettled times in the world. Things are getting more worrisome about the economy, and law and order in the land, and about WOK morality, or rather immorality taking over the nation. Are we losing life in America the way we knew it? **Bam!** It is so easy to fall back to earth and look down.

Don't let the events that are going on in the world now rob you of resurrection enlightenment. Jesus came as the Scriptures foretold. He came to take our sins away. **And He did!** Jesus came to suffer the curse of the law for us. **And He did!** Jesus died in our place and was buried and rose again that we might have life through faith in His name. **Jesus' lives** and because He lives, we shall live also. (John 14:19) That truth matters above all else and it brings peace and joy to our hearts in the face of this life's greatest distress. By grace the Lord has opened our understanding that we might comprehend the Scriptures and possess in our hearts and lives **Resurrection Enlightenment!**

"I know that my Redeemer lives;
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever-living Head.

"He lives to silence all my fears,
He lives to wipe away my tears,
He lives to calm my troubled heart,

He lives all blessings to impart.

“He lives, all glory to His name!

He lives, my Jesus, still the same.

Oh, the sweet joy this sentence gives,

“I know that my Redeemer lives!” (The Lutheran Hymnal 200:1,5,8)

AMEN.

“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” Amen. (Romans15:13)