

Let's pause a moment to locate ourselves.

In "real" time, we are on Eastern Daylight Time.

In Church time, we are at the third Sunday of Easter. But in Gospel Time
it is still the Day of Resurrection, and the news is still getting out.

So imagine that upper room once more, where the Eleven have been holed up –
first in despair, but now in growing amazement.

For now it is not only the women who have reported Jesus sightings –
now he has appeared to Peter as well, and then to the whole group in that room.
Imagine their excitement this evening, busting a gut wanting to tell the next
person who comes in the door. "It is true! The Lord has risen!"

And the door does open, and two people rush in, breathless,
with their own story to tell: "The Lord is risen indeed! Alleluia!"

Oh joy! But just a few hours earlier, those two people were walking and grieving.
Their world had crashed around them.

They had pinned their hopes on Jesus of Nazareth, who was clearly the real thing.
Clearly a prophet in the tradition of Moses and Elijah and Elisha –
a speaker of God's truth, a worker of miracles.

And all that hope had been snuffed out on a dark and horrible afternoon
when they watched him die.

The wife of one of these men, Cleopas, had helped take the body away
to the tomb, and had sat in watch outside it.

Maybe she is the second disciple in the story, walking with her husband.

Suddenly they are joined on the road by a man who is so ignorant of
what's been going on, he may as well have under a rock.

But they tell all that had happened, and they come to the heart of the matter:

"But we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel."

"We hoped he would save us, but he couldn't even save himself.

And now even his body is missing."

Has there ever been a time when that thing you most longed for, needed,
thought was finally going to come about, has been ripped away?

Your true love? Your rescue? Your opportunity? Your healing?

Where is God now? Where are our hopes now?

Jesus jumps right in. “What did you expect?” he says.
“Didn’t the prophets tell you that the Christ would have to suffer these things
and then enter his glory? How foolish you are, and how slow of heart.”
He knows He himself had told them, several times on the way to Jerusalem.
But they had never believed it.
How could they believe something they couldn’t conceive?
How can we believe something when we are so sure of how the world is
supposed to work? When we have expectations that are so clear and set?

It is our experience of “reality” that stunts our imaginations, that limits
our expectations, our ability to expect great things from God who blesses.
Maybe we can’t imagine ourselves free of this pain or that ailment.
Maybe we can’t imagine ourselves in a job that gives us real satisfaction.
Maybe we can’t imagine ourselves enjoying real love and joy.
Maybe we can’t imagine feeling safe in public again.

Those two on the road don’t believe Jesus could really be risen from the dead;
maybe that’s why they don’t recognize him.
It isn’t until they urge him to stay for supper, that something happens:
*When he was at table with them, he took bread, gave thanks,
broke it and began to give it to them.*
He took bread, blessed it, broke it and gave it to them.
Where have we heard these words before? So familiar.
And for these two, so recent – were they there that night in that upper room
when he did that and said that bread was his body, that wine his blood?

Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him...
When Jesus did this familiar thing, they knew him.
When he said Mary’s name in the garden, she recognized him.
When he helped them catch a boatload of fish, the disciples recognized him.

This is how Jesus shows himself to us, in his word spoken and proclaimed.
In the intimate connection of prayer, when he calls our names.
In the miracles he does through us – sometimes miracles of abundance,
or healing, miracles of friendship, of forgiveness, of faithfulness.
And He is present to us in this Sacrament of broken bread we share.
There is something about the taking and the blessing, the breaking and the eating,
that has enormous power to change lives.

That is a way in which we, the Body of Christ, the form in which Christ is now seen in the world, also live lives that are broken open and available to others.

Are we willing to be taken by Christ –

taken from the minutia of our lives to be signs to the world of God's life?

Are we willing to be blessed by Christ – to be given more of God's love, God's power, God's peace, God's joy, God's heart – than we ever imagined?

Are we willing to be broken by Christ –

to let our pride and self-sufficiency be yielded to God's control,

to let our wounds and resentments be brought to the light and healed,

to let our dreams and our disappointments be nailed to the cross

and die there so that we can receive God's dreams for us?

Are we willing to be given by Christ as a fragrant offering for the world,

servants, a prophets, ministers, healers, truth-tellers, peace-makers?

Are we willing to be taken, blessed, broken and given?

For we are called not only to perceive Christ. We are called to make Christ known, to carry God's contagious love into the world.

As hard as this time is, harder times are coming for many,

and the world will need us to carry that love in ways tangible and spiritual.

The road to Emmaus is where we often live – weighed down by sadness,

thwartedness, anxiety, disappointed expectations, afraid to hope again.

But we are not alone on that road – we are walking with each other, and more,

someone is walking with us, someone we don't always recognize,

someone with power to heal our broken hopes.

He is always there. He promised, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

He is always there – we just don't always recognize him.

When we least expect it, Christ reveals himself to us.

And then he seems to vanish. Why? Because he's calling us to follow him!

He is on the move, my beloveds, and he wants us on the road with him.

See, the road to Emmaus may be where we often live;

but the road to Jerusalem is where God is calling us to be,

on the move, taking our joy, our hope, back to our friends and families.

In Daylight Savings Time it is Sunday morning.

In Church Time it is Easter 3.

In Gospel Time it is still the Day of Resurrection,

and we still know plenty of people who haven't heard our Good news.

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! *Amen*.

Luke 24:13-35

Now on that same day two of Jesus' disciples 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.