

Lent Devotional April 9, 2023 – Easter Sunday

Scripture

Luke 24:13-35

13 Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. 18 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?" 19 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, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 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. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 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. 24 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." 25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 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. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. 32 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?" 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Devotional

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Each Gospel writer presents a different account of the resurrection. But one of the narrative elements that is consistent across each account is this: no one expected Jesus to be alive that Sunday morning. The darkness of the crucifixion on Good Friday continued to hover over all of his disciples. This is arguably best exemplified in this episode on the Emmaus road. You don't have to look far to get a sense of the defeat that Cleopas and the other disciple had to have been feeling. It's right there in verse 21: ". . . 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." In other words, they said, "We thought he was our Messiah, but we've given up any hope of that now." But after they had spent some time communing with the Lord and intently listening to his voice, they came to realize that he had indeed risen, just as he promised.

Often, it is so easy to get so caught up in the hardships of life that we, too, lose hope and abandon our faith in God. But what the resurrection teaches us is: 1) God is always at work, even when darkness abounds all around us; and 2) no matter what, God keeps God's promises. As the Lenten season comes to a close and we move into Eastertide, may we all remember to take time to commune with and listen to God. For it is in those moments when we are pressed on every side and we can't see our way that we must be bold enough in the Spirit to declare, "I still expect God to work it out."

Prayer

Kind and loving God, thank you for the gift of the resurrection. May it always serve as a reminder to us of your incomprehensible, incalculable, overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love for us, and your commitment to do whatever it takes to save your people. Help us to confront our doubts when evil seems to prevail. Help us to depend on your promises when trials come. Help us to always expect a miracle. In your name we pray, Amen.