

Easter 3 Year A – April 26, 2020

Luke 24:13-35

Epiphany, Winnipeg

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Today we join the followers of Jesus on their continuing stroll down the road of not really knowing anything. Two weeks ago we heard the story of the resurrection of Jesus. Mary Magdalene was the first to hear the news, and she didn't know what was happening so she went and told two good friends of Jesus, and they looked into the empty tomb and didn't understand. After that Mary *did* meet Jesus, but *didn't* recognize him, then once she knew who he was she told the disciples, and they immediately went and locked themselves in a room, where we found them last week. Last week we also heard all about how Thomas couldn't believe the news either when he first heard it. In the gospel of Luke the women get the message first – like they do in all the gospels – and they preach the message first – like they do in all the gospels – and Luke says that all the disciples think that it's just idle woman talk. And today we pick up the story again and it's later on on that same day and two of the disciples are walking down the road all mystified and baffled and unsure.

If you've ever thought that it would be easier to believe "if only you'd been there when Jesus walked the earth," well...think again. Apparently it wasn't any easier for Jesus' followers to believe then than it is now. So if it's hard to believe now, or if it seems too good to be true or too strange to be true, it's OK. You're in good company. If belief comes easily and clearly now, and trusting Jesus is as natural as breathing, that's OK too – you're in good company.

On this Sunday morning, or whenever it is that you're stepping out on the road with us, we're all kind of moving out on this road and walking along with one another, with all the other disciples from all over the place and all over the time. There's room on this walk for the ones who get it, and there's lots of room for those of us who don't. And we might not even know it, but somewhere on that road Jesus is there too; Jesus is here too. Sometimes he's asking us the simple question, "So what are you talking about while you walk along here?" Sometimes he's saying, "You know...remember what those prophets said? and what those women said? and what those people you might not have bothered to listen to said? It's all true. I'm here, and I'm alive." Then he keeps walking the road with us.

But you know, sometimes you've just got to stop walking and talking...and just sit down and have something to eat. So Jesus and his disciples arrive at a small town called Emmaus, and when they're sitting at a table Jesus says a prayer of thanks for the food, gives some bread to his travelling companions, their eyes are opened and they see that it's Jesus.

Then he disappears...but even though they can't see him any more, they *have* seen, and they remember, and they go to tell their friends who they have seen.

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This isn't a lesson in proper nutrition, or a well-meaning instruction to slow down and smell the roses. It's not even really about the importance of breaking bread together, like when we sit down at a dinner table with friends, or like when we gather at a communion table together, even though those connections are clear.

For us in these days, this whole walk that we take with one another and with Jesus on the road to Emmaus....this breaking bread together when we're finally sitting at the table together, it all gives us permission to stop trying to figure out everything right now. And that's really important right now.

These last few months have been so full of questions, haven't they? It started early in the new year when we wondered if this whole thing we were hearing about was really anything to worry about, and maybe we had opinions but most of us weren't really sure. Then it all started to spread and you know where it's brought us now, and I don't need to tell you what your questions have been or what your fears have been or whether there's a worry that keeps you up at night with all of this. Now we're starting to ask about what's next and whether we'll open up soon and how much this will all change our future together and even what the country or the church will look like when it's all settled out....and the troubling thing is that we don't really know, no matter how much we talk about it as we make our way down the road. We don't know.

And then there's everything that happened in Nova Scotia just a few days ago. There's so much "Why?" and "How?" and "What does this all mean," and there's so much that we just don't know.

It's exhausting to keep asking questions we can't answer and to keep trying to figure out what's so hard to understand. We have to do that, but maybe the simple word we speak now – Christ is risen! – just gives us permission to stop trying for awhile; just to sit down, and to trust what we've heard: that the grave is empty, that Christ is risen, that whatever is broken will be put back together and that the end of this story is always going to be a word of life. That's the promise of Easter, that however everything unfolds, life will have the last word.

Two disciples eating with Jesus after a long weekend of too much changing too quickly finally catch a glimpse of Jesus right there with them, and they see that it's true. And then he vanishes. But they've seen that this crazy word of life is true, and they go to tell the others, or they go back to the lab to look for a vaccine, or they bring their neighbour some groceries or volunteer somewhere or pray and live in hope, or go for a walk because isn't it a gorgeous spring day, all because they have seen that the end of this story and the beginning of all the stories to come is life, a life that will win the day...because Christ is risen.

So go have a snack. Even though you couldn't figure it all out, we couldn't figure it all out, we'll see again that Jesus has been with us this whole time, and it's true: Christ is risen.                    AMEN.