

Lutheran Church of the Master, 4800 Ramsey Road, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho
Pastor Neal Buckaloo
Sunday, May 8, 2011, The Third Sunday of Easter
A Troubled Spirit, A Troubled mind

A troubled spirit, a troubled mind. There are times I just have to go for a walk. My mind is troubled, perhaps I am upset. The more troubled my mind, the faster I walk. At best, the walk releases pent up energy and tension. The upset is not dissolved - only relieved of pent up tension. The mind continues to turn and tumble, but less intensely and rapidly.

There is resignation. The only hope, often enough, is that time will unravel some partial peace, some partial resolution. And so there is an edge to the waiting. Bewilderment is a place and time filled with incomprehension, bafflement, perplexity, disorientation and confusion. It can be consuming.

Such must have been the case for Cleopas and his companion returning to Emmaus. Dismayed, troubled, not understanding, faced with a diminished hope, these two companions talk along the road. With the news of the morning, ^{Luke 24: 22} . . . (S)ome 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." These were followers of Jesus. They had closely taken in the events in Jerusalem regarding Jesus. Perhaps they had delayed their return to Emmaus for later in the day, as it was almost evening when they arrived at their home. Perhaps they had waited for some confirming word, some citing of the Risen Jesus to meet their kept hope.

In spite of all they knew, all the stories they could rehearse, in spite of the witness of others, they simply had not seen Jesus--nor had anyone else they knew. The prophecies of Jesus and hope of redemption grew cold and were not able to sustain them any longer. They began to suspect that the whole thing had been a mistake, a worthy hope and one unlikely ever to be realized. For them, Good Friday had not been Good. Time had passed and there was no change, no resurrection, no Jesus.¹

A third traveler appeared and inquired, ^(Luke 24:17) "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" Cleopas and his companion are stopped by the sheer sadness of the response they will make (skythropos, verse 17).² This stranger then speaks to the events which took place regarding Jesus of Nazareth. First he states, ^{Luke 24: 25b-26} "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have

¹ Commentary on Gospel by Sarah Henrich, Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, www.workingpreacher.org

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declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" Then this stranger begins unraveling scripture from Moses through the prophets. Cleopas and his companion listen intently.

They also were people who were concerned for this traveling companion of theirs who thought he'd press on in the evening. . . Surely the man who had spent so much time with them talking about Scripture would be better served by a simple meal and safe accommodations for the night. The two travelers have to nearly force Jesus to stay with them. . . The verb means to "twist someone's arm," to "compel." The two were so eager for Jesus to stay with them that they would have almost forced him. But it did not come to that, of course. Jesus was planning to stay the whole time. In fact, Jesus was there the whole time.³

It is here that we come to the central part of this appearance of Jesus. Cleopas and his companion could not SEE Jesus as their risen Lord explained how Moses and prophets make clear that it was ^(Luke 24:26) "necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory." For Cleopas, his companion and for us it is in the breaking of the bread; it is in receiving the bread and wine, that we see Jesus, risen, ascended, coming to us again with the gifts of God for our living.

Cleopas and his companion are us. They know a lot. They care a lot. They think about things and are saddened by their diminished hopes. More important, they don't even know that their eyes have been closed until suddenly they are opened. We can't control the One who opens and closes eyes. But from this story, we might find hope that Jesus walks with us. We do find hope that in the breaking of the bread (24:35), we catch a glimpse of our Lord.⁴

In receiving the bread broken for us with thanksgiving and in feeding others at the right time, we are given Jesus. Stop talking, stop everything, and pay attention as you reach out to receive what is blessed. A glimpse of the Lord may propel you to new confidence, new hope, even a new way of remembering.⁵ In the words of the Apostle Paul, **Romans 15:13** May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

3 Commentary on Gospel by [Sarah Henrich](#), **Professor of New Testament**, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, www.workingpreacher.org

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