

**“Now on that same day two of them 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.” (Luke 24:13–35, NRSV)**

Grace and peace to you from God our father and from our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. My, we have a lot to unpack this week and I think at this point I want to start off talking about Peter's sermon this is the sermon that he preached we will know this of course in Acts chapter 2 is the beginning is in the beginning of Acts chapter two that we have the lesson from Acts for the day of Pentecost so this sermon is actually the sermon that Peter preaches at Pentecost and he tells the crowd, "Let the entire House of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah this Jesus whom you crucified. Now when they heard this when the crowd heard this they were cut to the heart and said to Peter answer the other apostles brothers what should we do and again that's even for Christians it's a hard thing for us to just let go of the idea that there's something we can do but at the very beginning what's the message that Peter preaches to them

it's the same message that any good preacher preached to anyone right repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the promises for you for your children and for all who are far away everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him and Peter continued to testify with many other arguments and exhorted them saying save yourselves from this corrupt generation so those who welcomed his message were baptized and that day about 3000 persons were added and so a powerful thing had happened and Peter, (the one who had once denied Jesus three times) not only does he come to believe, but he comes to believe and preach boldly.

Then we have this wonderful gospel today: the walk to Emmaus and it says so many things one of the things that we could almost picture in our minds Luke is very good about writing the gospel in a way that's very descriptive and so we get this message about how many disciples 2 disciples now were they among the Jesus center circle the 11 that were left after Judas had betrayed him? No they were other people who follow Jesus. Not always is the word disciple referring to just one of the 12 so one of them is named Cleopas and Jesus kind of visits them Incognito it's kind of an interesting story while they're talking and discussing Jesus himself came near and went with them but their eyes were kept from recognizing Him. This isn't the first time that happens in the gospels but this is an interesting thing because Jesus comes Incognito and he pretends to know nothing about everything that happened so he asks and in a way we can see this is kind of Jesus drawing their confession out of them - their confession of faith - their testimony even in the fledgling way that their faith is because no one had ever experienced what the prophets for centuries had been prophesying about and that Jesus begins to unpack that with them on this journey. It's an exciting journey but it starts in a very low-key way right? At first, their eyes were kept from recognizing Jesus and so he says what are you discussing with each other while your walk along? And they stood still looking sad and one of them whose name was Cleopas and answers him are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days? and so here we have it we have Jesus drawing their confession out of them their confession of faith and then they tell the story of 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. So they're telling him the whole story and this is the key – “But, we had hoped” -- “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 and so we understand now that we are still in Easter on that Easter Sunday that first Easter Sunday so we went back on Easter Sunday of course we heard about Mary, and then last week we heard about Jesus coming that very same night to visit 10 (11 – 1) and that one being Thomas. So, what does Jesus do? He comes again the next week. Now we're going back again, chronologically anyway to that first Easter Sunday but in the evening. OK, so they're having (Cleopas and this other unnamed disciple) are having this walk to Emmaus and Jesus meets them on the road and one of the things that this is teaching me right away is that it's a fulfillment, if you will, of what Jesus tells the disciples before he's crucified. Whenever two or more of you are gathered in my name, there I am in the midst of you. So they were talking with each other about Jesus; how they had been disappointed, how they had hoped “we had hoped

that he was the one to redeem Israel,” and a lot of that hoping was wrapped up into having another mighty Messiah come and a mighty anointed one like their King David, the Son of David is this Messiah but what they did not understand was what we heard about again last week and I imagine one of the lessons that Jesus shares with them on the road after he says how slow of heart you were to believe. They tell Jesus, “Moreover, some of our group, women of our group astounded us! They were at the tomb earlier 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 didn't see him. Then Jesus said to them, “Oh how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had declared. It's not easy to remember the prophets words especially the prophets words that are the kind that we like to kind of avoid. All those words in Isaiah chapter 53 is no doubt one of the ones that he unfolds to them. How foolish you are how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had 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 all the things about himself in all the scriptures. So of course it wasn't just Isaiah but certainly Isaiah is one of those lessons about the suffering servant that describes very well word-for-word what a crucifixion death would be like. And so, as they came near the village to which they were going Jesus 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 and 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. Then they finally realized who this stranger was. He wasn't a stranger at all. He was their master. He was their Messiah. He was their teacher. Their eyes were opened. Then they said to each other (another wonderful nugget) “were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road while he was opening the scripture to us? Were not our hearts burning?! So, it's amazing that yes they finally do have their “A-ha moment,” when they recognize him in the breaking of the bread. Another wonderful thing about this gospel lesson In addition to whenever two or more are gathered in Jesus name he is there in the midst of them we also come to understand that yes, we do recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread.

Martin Luther often talked about the benefits of word and sacrament in this way. We have the preached word which is the invisible word (the word that is heard) and the visible word, being the sacrament -- the sacrament of the altar. Specifically for those of us all of us who are baptized and so this wonderful lesson is one of the things that supports this idea of the visible word. Cleopas and the other disciple (only after Jesus had started to break the bread) did things finally click with them They had Jesus up there beginning to bless the bread, and break the bread. Just as they recognize that this indeed was Jesus their teacher he vanishes from their sight. So it's a reminder that whenever we gather around word and sacrament we're in Jesus presence those are two wonderful ways in which we remember and as I've shared before and I hope and suspect many of you if not all of you you're also aching for us to gather around the Lords table again when we can indeed again discern the Lords body and blood in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. This is a marvelous reminder of the ways in which Christ is present for us each time we gather in his name.

Cleopas asks the other disciple, “Did not our hearts burn on the road while he was opening to us the scripture?!” Another thing that this is an illustration of for me is that “A bruised Reed he will not strike down and a smoldering Wick he won’t blow out. (Matthew 12:20) In other words Jesus gives a little tough love in this. He says how foolish and slow of heart you were to believe but he tells this to Cleopas and the other unnamed disciple. We remember Jesus tells Peter to get behind me Satan (when Peter starts rebuking him) when Jesus foretells that he will be crucified and on the third day be raised from the dead. But long ago Peter just didn't want to hear this but Jesus told Peter “you’re thinking as men think, you're not thinking as God thinks. This is why I was sent here. This is why I took you on as a disciple. So this is evidence of Jesus’ tough love with Cleopas and the other disciple is just that, It's love primarily, but he's just telling them that the prophets weren't kidding. The prophets knew what they were talking about. The prophets were speaking on God's behalf that when God sent his Messiah that he would suffer in this way and then on the third day he would rise again - for Jesus is risen he is risen indeed alleluia! (I bet you thought I forgot that we were going to be saying that throughout the season of Easter - you never know when it's coming) and that's the great hope and that's the great joy of what Easter is all about. That resurrection comes to these disciples when they're about their day-to-day. Cleopas and the other disciple are dejected and they “had hoped.” In many ways this lesson is a very good Easter lesson for us Easter people in the midst of quarantine - in the midst of wanting to be together, but not being able to be together for the safety of others out of love for one another. The challenge of these times is even more challenging, but very crucial, to who we are as Christians. That knowing that in spite of all of the fear that surrounds us of all the darkness there is light at the end of this tunnel we're still in the midst of. That Jesus is risen - he is risen indeed, Alleluia!

So -- the takeaways we hear from Peter's sermon in Acts, we hear about the killing effects of our sin and we get to meet our crucified and risen Lord this time on the road to Emmaus with Cleopas and the other unnamed disciple. We get to get a foretaste of the eternal joys and unity of all of us. All Christians around the world who are raised to faith in Jesus. So, as Eastertide rolls along, and as we yearn and ache to gather around that table to recognize once again Jesus in the breaking of the bread we can feel a kinship with Cleopas and the other disciple. As we hear the words of Christ as we hear the word of God, may our hearts still burn with the knowledge that Jesus is risen he is risen indeed ALLELUIA! A joyous Eastertide, one and all. God bless you all and I miss you all Amen.