

It's Not Over Yet

Luke 24:13-32 ¹³ Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What kind of conversation *is* this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?" ¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?" ¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ "and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. ²¹ "But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. ²² "Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. ²³ "When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. ²⁴ "And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see." ²⁵ Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. ²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them. ³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. ³² And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?"

On Monday night November 6th, 2000, the Packers played the Vikings. Many of you probably remember the play that won that game. Favre passed to Freeman. Freeman tripped and fell. Dishman reaches to intercept the ball but drops it seemingly right on Freeman's back. Even though he was flat on his stomach Freeman managed to catch the ball and run it in for a touchdown.

It was cold and wet and late at night. The game was already in overtime. Many people had already left. When they saw Freeman on the ground many more get up to leave as well. The aisles were full of people leaving when they started to realize that Freeman was up and running again.

I remember sitting there thinking, "Why are you leaving? It's not over yet."

Two disciples were leaving, walking away, their whole attitude makes it clear that they believe it's over. What the women saw was interesting enough to talk about but didn't really change the fact that Jesus was flat on the ground. He was dead. It was over. Or so they thought.

They were going to find out real soon that it wasn't over yet. It wasn't over for them and it isn't over for us.

Easter is not over yet. There is still a large basket full of chocolate sitting on our buffet table. Vanessa covers it with a magazine so that she will not be tempted but we both know the chocolate is there under the magazine. Jesus is hidden from our eyes, but He is risen and because He lives Easter is not over yet and indeed never will be.

The account of the Emmaus disciples is one that teaches us that Easter is not yet over. Not the easter of a week ago but the true Easter, the resurrection of our Lord. He is risen and He walks with us as He did those two disciples. I think that is why the picture on the front of your bulletin is so especially beloved, because it is such a beautiful reminder that even when the chocolate is gone the resurrection is still not over, and never will be. It portrays Easter not as it was to the women, an empty tomb, but as it is now, Jesus living and walking with us.

These two disciples were leaving Jerusalem. They were talking about Jesus' suffering and death. They were walking "sad." That is, they were filled with gloom and sadness. But not too much longer they were running to Jerusalem, they were talking not about a dead man but about a living savior, they will filled with joy and gladness.

Jesus is Risen. It's not over yet.

So it is with us. Every Sunday is a celebration of Jesus' resurrection. Every Sunday a chance to walk with Jesus. Throughout the week we slowly drift away from Jerusalem, from Jesus and from His resurrection. We focus on our suffering and the dead things of this world. On Sunday morning Jesus comes to walk with us to turn our sorrow into joy.

Psalm 42:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance.

John 16:33 "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

There is no end to the length or depth of the comfort that Jesus gives to us as he walks with us.

These disciples are blind to the truth of who Jesus is, yet later their eyes are open to know Him.

The scripture is unclear. It does not tell us why their eyes are blinded. The English makes it sound like their eyes were blinded by an outside agent. Many take it therefore to mean that Jesus himself stopped them from seeing who He truly was. However, the agent is left unspecified and it is also possible to understand that they themselves blinded their eyes. They did not recognize Jesus because they themselves were not willing to believe.

Regardless of whether Jesus restrained their eyes it is clear that they had closed their hearts. Yet Jesus comes to them to open their eyes and their hearts.

Over and over again we close our eyes and our hearts to believe Jesus' power in our lives. We forget that easter is not over. That the risen Jesus is present with us, with power.

Isaiah 42:3 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench;

Why does the Lord come to these two? They are not of the twelve, they are never mentioned again in scripture. Yet they are among the first to see Jesus risen.

He does not appear because of their great faith but because of their great weakness. It is precisely because they are weak and unbelieving and wandering away that Jesus comes to them. Here are two lost wandering sheep. Jesus comes to find them and bring them back. Here Jesus is the good shepherd.

Isa 40:11 He will feed His flock like a shepherd; He will gather the lambs with His arm, And carry them in His bosom, And gently lead those who are with young.

It is not over yet. Even when we close our eyes, Jesus comes to open them.

Jesus miraculously appears to them and later is suddenly gone from their sight.

At this point Jesus has not yet as he told Mary "ascended to the Father." According to His human nature He is still limited. While He is with these disciples He is not with the others, while He is with the others He is not with them.

Since His ascension Jesus no longer appears to us as He did to these two and many more. Yet even though we cannot see Him it's not over yet.

Earlier He told his disciples "it is to your advantage that I go away."

Because He ascended to the Father, even according to His human nature He can give to us the promise that He is with us always. He is hidden from our eyes but He is walking with us always.

Matthew 28:20 and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Even though He left their sight, even though He is hidden from our sight, it is not over yet.

He opens to them all of scripture and He also breaks bread with them.

This breaking of bread is not the Lord's Supper. There is no cup involved. There is no indication that they even ate the bread. Nevertheless, Jesus reveals himself to them in the breaking of bread as He reveals Himself to us in the breaking of bread at the Lord's Supper. It is not the Lord's Supper, but it is the Lord fellowshiping with them as He does with us in Communion.

When I was in Germany I visited a church where they had three sermons. They were in different languages and given by different speakers. I commented on it later to one of the members.

"Why do you have three sermons?"

“The sermon is the most important part of the service.”

Jesus did indeed discuss the scriptures, opening the scriptures to the hearts of the disciples. Yet even there it is not the sermon that is of main importance but the word. It is the Scriptures which matter. In the sermon we wrestle with the word of God seeking to understand it, seeking to bend our lives around it. We don't bend His word to fit our lives, but we do try to see our lives through His word. The sermon is there to help us wrestle with God's word, but still, it is the scriptures which are the key.

But it is not over yet the scriptures by themselves do not open their hearts to see Jesus, but the word and the breaking of bread, the word and the sacrament. These two go together like peanut butter and jelly, like Jim and Pam. It is the word which burns in the hearts and the breaking of bread which opens their eyes.

The western church tends to overemphasize the rational, the word. The eastern church tends to overemphasize the mystical, the sacraments. It is word and breaking of bread through which Jesus is revealed to the Emmaus Disciples and it is word and sacrament through which he is revealed to us.

Acts 2:42 they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

It is not over yet, Jesus reveals Himself in the word and the sacraments. As long as Jesus lives it is still Easter. As long as we have word and sacrament Jesus walks with us.

I learned on November 6th not to walk away even when Freeman is flat on his face. More importantly the Emmaus disciples learned not to walk away even when Jesus was in the grave. It's not over yet, Jesus lives.