

Sermon Outline
Third Sunday of Easter
Pastor A. David Anglada
Grace Lutheran Church and School
Malverne, New York
"Hopelessness to Hope"

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.

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"Hopelessness to Hope"

Introduction to the Word:

Listen for the word that stands the test of time.

Listen for the word that lives and moves among us.

Listen for the word that God is speaking to us this day.

During the past twenty-five years serving as a Pastor of Word and Sacrament, there is a phrase that I have heard on numerous occasions when a parishioner or members of their immediate family members has faced a difficult time or life challenges that has altered their lifestyle.

The expression is **We, Had Hope!** For example, when a person has lost a family member to a terminal illness, they would say **I had hoped** that this new experimental treatment or medicine would had work a miracle or saved his or her life.

"We Had hope!" Their dreams and hopes become a moment of hopelessness. One a person visiting a family member in the ICU, and they died, we pack up the individuals belongs, and we say, **"We Had Hope,"** and then you go home alone.

In our gospel story today on Easter Sunday afternoon, two of Jesus's followers, Cleopas and unnamed individual, most likely Cleopas's wife, were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, about seven miles. They had been in Jerusalem for the Passover, about two hours away, but it had been a terrible Passover.

They were disciples of Jesus, and they had gotten the shock of their lives when they learned that Jesus had been crucified. They could hardly believe it. There Messiah was taken away from them.

Luke informs us that as they were walking along that dusty road toward their Emmaus home, they were talking with each other about the things that had happened. One thing that had happened, without a doubt, was the crucifixion of Jesus.

The gospel writer also communicates to the early church that the tomb where had laid Jesus was empty, Jesus who was crucified, buried in the tomb had been risen from the dead by the power of God.

Like New Yorkers in the days after 9/11, perhaps many of us sorting through the impact of the Coronavirus throughout Long Island, New York.

We must talk about these life-unending events, as well as the unthinkable happenings. We try to make sense of what is taking place in the world, and we cannot find an ending to our questions or our honest inquiry about why we are going through this.

I can picture Cleopas and his partner with heavy hearts but, at the same time, lost in intense conversation. A week ago, they came to Jerusalem with high hopes. Now they are leaving with hopelessness. Most likely, they were trying to make sense out of the nonsense.

Perhaps they said to themselves: Why would anyone kill Jesus? What had gone wrong? Why would the tomb be empty? Would the authorities hunt down the disciples next? I am sure that the two disciples must have wondered if their lives might be also in danger.

Suddenly they are interrupted by a stranger unknown to them, walking alongside them. The stranger who seemed to know nothing about Jesus on the road asked Cleopas and his companion, what were you talking about?

Cleopas tries to explain the events of the past week to this pilgrim: **We Had Hoped**

Can you hear the disappointment in his voice?

It sounds like us when we are facing life's disappointments.

So they began to tell this stranger about Jesus-how he was prophet mighty in deed and word, how the chief priests and leaders handed Jesus over to be crucified-how the disciple had hoped that Jesus would be the one. But their hopes

had been shattered by the crucifixion. They also told him about the woman's report that the tomb was empty Sunday, morning.

The stranger interrupted them. 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.

Cleopas and his companion still did not recognize that the stranger was Jesus.

Then they arrived in Emmaus. The sun was beginning to set, so the two disciples still not understanding that they were talking to Jesus invited him to stay for the night.

Jesus joined them for dinner. Please, note that It was customary in the days of Jesus; to invite a guest to stay overnight in your home for the night if the sun was going down.

It was also about welcoming the stranger and offering hospitality. A stranger would never ask to stay in person's home. One waited until being asked, would you like to join us for the night. Jesus kept walking until being asked please join us for dinner and stay with us.

May we as a congregation continue practicing hospitality as Cleopas and his companion did towards Jesus. We never know if the stranger we invite and welcome in our midst is Jesus himself.

In Jewish homes, the host would take the Bread and break it and bless it and pass it around the table. But this night, Jesus did that. Jesus was the guest in this house, but he acted as the host. Luke says: **When he was at the table with them, he took Bread, blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them.**

Don't we all recognize these words? They are very much like the words we use to observe the Lord's Supper. Jesus "took Bread and gave thanks. Breaking it, he gave it to them."

Luke says: Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. This expression their eyes were opened is the same

expression used to describe the opening of the deaf ears of a man Jesus healed in Marks gospel (Mark 7: 34-35).

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?"

So even though night was falling, and it was seven miles to Jerusalem, these two disciples got up from their dinner table and walked back to the city so they could tell the other disciples what they had seen. They found the apostles and the other disciples talking excitedly about Peter, who had seen Jesus.

Then Luke concludes the story with these words. 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.

Jesus had been made known to them in the breaking of Bread, just as Jesus is also made known to us today in the breaking of Bread! **(use the bread to illustrate the above).**

**Cleopas and his companion were hopeless,
but now they are hopeful!**

When I reread the Emmaus Road story this year, I say to myself, this story is so appropriate for us today. Let us face it, globally, and in the United States of America especially in New York State, we are going through some difficult times, as well as an uncertain economy. Yes, we are afraid and petrified. At times we are like Cleopas, and his companion; we fail to see the risen Christ walking beside us.

So much of what we had hoped for this spring, did not come to past. Graduations, anniversaries and other family rituals as well as family cultural traditions we hold dear to our hearts will not take place in the coming months. Sports fans are mourning that will not be able to attend their favorite stadiums or arenas this coming sports seasons.

Besides all this, it is now over a month and half and people are still dying.

Moreover, we keep hearing various projections about when we will go back to normal or if we will ever go back to normal or what normal will look like after all this.

My good friends let us not lose sight that the Risen Christ is with us on this third Sunday of Easter; Easter is not canceled; Easter will never be canceled. The Risen Christ is known to us in the breaking of the Bread.

Many have lost their faith and hope; equally important, many are living in a state of hopelessness.

People of God, Christ, is alive, Christ is Risen, we are not alone. Christ is walking alongside us, and at times we failed to recognize him.

The Risen Christ reminds us of all that we may forget when we are overwhelmed by current events. Christ makes himself known to us so that we can go and make Him known to others.

Beloved in the Lord, the power of death is countered by the power of life.

Yes, life has become challenging for us, but I still see hope:

I still see hope in each one of us, as we call each other up to make sure that we are okay.

I still see hope in our medical community as they give of themselves to save lives.

I still see hope in our first responders giving of themselves to make sure we are okay.

I still see hope in our Grace schoolteachers who give of themselves unconditionally to make sure our children are receiving an education of excellence.

This past Wednesday, 7:45 in the evening, our first-grade teacher Ms. LeBlanc came to the home of one of her student (ki lilly) Kylie Hazzard, to sing to her happy birthday, Ms. LeBlanc was accompanied by her mother who helped sing happy birthday from her car. Furthermore, they brought her birthday treats. She wanted to make sure her student Kylie birthday was not forgotten since, all classes are suspended in our education building due to the Coronavirus.

I still see hope in humanity as we pool together to help each other and be present for each other.

I still see hope in our children as they send greeting cards to their grandparents telling them how much they miss and love them.

I still see hope when I see: emergency medical technicians, police officers, firefighters standing in front of a hospital in South Bronx, clapping plus cheering on nurses, nurses' aides, and medical doctors for their gift of healing and bring hope to victims of the Coronavirus.

Sisters and brothers, Christ is risen, He is risen indeed, and is walking alongside us. Sometimes Christ comes to us in the form of a person helping your out, in our nurses, home attendants, nurses aid, medical doctors, and first responders.

Response to the Word:

Let us pray:

We have called on God, and God's word has been spoken in our midst, Christ has joined us here, and will stay with us, even as we depart from this time of worship. The Spirit is moving in our lives, revealing the truth of resurrection and life through all that we say and all that we do.

Please, join us today at 10 am for our community gathering via ZOOM