

3rd Sunday Easter A 11

May 8, 2011

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer.
Amen.

Today we read from the final chapter of the Gospel of Luke. As a writer, Luke is a story teller, working to engage and pull the reader or listener into the narrative. Working to put us into the story so we might also become witnesses to the events he is describing.

Last week Thomas expressed his desires to see and touch the risen Jesus. But there in the room were many others, unnamed disciples along with thousands of others throughout the generations who have also longed to see and touch Jesus.

In using unnamed persons within the story, Luke invites us to put ourselves in the shoes of those persons, there by the power of our minds we are able to place ourselves in the event to allow us to hear and experience the person of Jesus, the presence of Christ just as we long for.

Today we continue Luke's narrative of the resurrected Jesus visiting and showing himself to his disciples and others. Here on the evening of the first Easter, here late on that first day of the week, as the day was drawing to a close; two persons, followers of Jesus were walking the 7 miles down the road to Emmaus. We know only the name of one of them, we know not why they were traveling, where they were headed, most would speculate they were headed home after spending the holy days of Passover in Jerusalem. Yet

May 8, 2011

these last 3 days were much different than the many other holy days spent in the great city of Jerusalem. So it was not surprising that their conversation focused on the events they witnessed the past three days as they slowly walked the dusty road home.

This story really speaks to me as a walker, as a person who journeys around the streets and sidewalks of Platteville. Most every day I get my 10,000 steps as Chloe and I walk at the end of the day. It is a time for me to clear my head, to release any stress I might have from the day, to contemplate and listen to the Holy Spirit as to the words God gives me to speak. Yet as I walk I trust and believe that I am not alone. Not only is Chloe by my side, but I believe that the Spirit of Christ is there with me as well just as Jesus promised. Jesus sojourns alongside us as we travel the roads and streets of this life. He does so without fanfare, without calling attention to himself but with quiet presence joins us on our journey down the paths this life takes us.

Much like he did with these two disciples as they walked down the road to Emmaus, with little explanation as to how they met up, suddenly this stranger, a fellow sojourner joins them on their journey. We know the person as Jesus, yet they were kept from recognizing him. As they continued their conversation about the events of the last three days with this stranger just listening in till he finally asking for more information as to what they were

May 8, 2011

discussing. Astounded they stop their journey to begin to explain and recount the events of the last few days.

Here these followers of Jesus begin to express their doubts, their sadness, their disappointment and their grief over the death of Jesus and the actions of the priests and leaders. We get a glimpse of the despair and sadness they are experiencing when they say, "But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." Their hopes and dreams were dashed at the death of Jesus. Even as they confess they had received evidence that Jesus had been raised from the dead and was alive according to the angels and the women at the tomb early that morning. Yet here they are walking home tired, grieving and disappointed at what they perceived was the end of their hopes and dreams.

Jesus responds by chastising them a little then goes on to explain, reminding them of all the ways the scriptures foretold the events they were witnesses to. Going into greater depths about what Moses and the prophets spoke about the Messiah, about the promises and hopes that generations had held onto which have now been fulfilled.

Then as they approached the village, as they arrived at their hometown, the day was coming to a close and they compelled Jesus to stay with them for the evening. Then in the sharing of the meal, in the blessing and breaking of the bread Jesus becomes visible to them then he vanishes. It was in the familiar

May 8, 2011

and the ordinary, in the sharing of the meal and the breaking of the bread that Christ became known to them. A meal much like the one they would have shared with Jesus just 3 days earlier when they shared the Passover meal in the upper room with the apostles and others.

There in that moment their eyes saw what their hearts knew all along. Here in that moment the details of the resurrection, the evidence they had heard about became real and personal for them. Here in that moment they became part of a growing number of persons who saw and felt the presence of their risen Lord. That which they had hoped for became true. This news could not wait until morning and they were compelled to return to Jerusalem. So immediately they left their home hurrying back up that same dusty road to proclaim the good news to the apostles and the rest of the disciples. They quickly returned to tell how Jesus had journeyed with them on the road, how he had taught them, reminded them of the scriptures and how in the breaking of the bread Jesus was made known to them.

Our lives are different from those of the followers of Jesus, from Cleopas and his traveling companion. They had to hurry back over a dark and dangerous road to deliver the exciting news to the apostles. They hurried out of their home to journey back to Jerusalem to deliver and witness to their experience. But now for us, should we have an exciting experience we don't have to leave

May 8, 2011

our homes, we just pick up a phone to call our family, we take out our cell phones to text our friends, we open our computers to post an update on our Facebook or to tweet our experience to our friends and followers.

Last Wednesday, as confirmation is coming to a close for this year, I have once again discussed the sacraments with the confirmands. I want them to if nothing else to understand the gift of grace we receive each time we partake in the Lord's Supper. We discussed how we believe that in these simple, ordinary everyday items of bread and wine Jesus is present. For us as the bread is blessed and broken, as the words are spoken they remain bread and wine, while they become the body and blood of Jesus. Here in these elements of the meal Christ presence is made known to us, here our risen Lord is – in / with / and under the bread and wine. Here as the words of Jesus are spoken we too are able to see and touch our Lord. Here through the eyes of faith Jesus becomes visible to us.

So as we gather in this place, in the space we might describe as our faith home, we gather to hear and seek the presence of Jesus our risen Lord. Here as we come to share the meal Christ gave us, here as we gather around his table Jesus has promised to meet us. Here in the blessing and breaking of the bread Christ is made know to us. Do you see him? Do you experience him? Do your eyes see what your hearts already know is true? Are you

3rd Sunday Easter A 11

May 8, 2011

feeling compelled to phone your family, to text your friends to post an update on your Facebook or tweet the good news?

This is the journey we have been given. For we are sojourners on the road home speaking, sharing and giving witness to the good news. For from here we are compelled to go and to tell others that Jesus, the one we had hoped would be the one to redeem us is alive, that the Lord is risen that Christ has made himself known to us in the sharing of the meal, in the blessing and breaking of the bread. Thanks be to God.

AMEN

T.G.B.T.G.

Pastor Michael