

## **Did Y'all Hear the News?**

**Rev. Terrance Jacob on Luke 24:13-25 SALC, 4/19/26**

Breaking News stories appear all the time. It's almost like the cry wolf syndrome now. Everything seems to be a breaking news story. Last Sunday, I saw a notification on my phone saying breaking news. I didn't open it. But we eventually read it right? Because someone is going to ask you, "Didn't you hear?" And you don't want to appear "uninformed" - even if it is some insignificant "news propaganda" hype. I think it was something about the quarrel between the American Pope and the American Jesus, or something like that, right? Everyone got bent out of shape. So I had to open the message, because someone will ask, "Did you hear?" Or when you look blank, they'll accusingly say, "Wait, you didn't hear?"

Cleopas asked the enquiring man who joined them on the road to Emmaus, "Didn't you hear? Are you the only one in Jerusalem this weekend who does not know what happened?! Where have you been? Which rock have you been hiding under? Their world was shaken, so why wasn't this guy's world shaken too. What's wrong with him? So indifferent to the challenges of our time. And no, I'm not going to talk about that meme or the Holy Father.

When we are sad and miserable or depressed and confused, we can get snappy. Without realizing it we can be snappy, short, and dismissive even towards total strangers. Often sad and miserable people want the whole world to be sad with them... and miserable with them too. But the other thing about grief or pain and strangers is that strangers can be useful to help you unload. They can be cathartic, as grief counselors would say. And you don't

have to pay the stranger to listen. This stranger on the way to Emmaus fortuitously asked them what they were talking about.

They proceeded to lay it on thick, with all the details - all the gory details! If you've been the stranger that a sad, frustrated, miserable person sat next to on the plane or met on your walk, you'll know. If you want to help yourself, let alone helping the other, do your best to take over the conversation, and see where that goes.

In the text though, this stranger took over the conversation. You see, when Jesus finds us stricken by pain and grief, perplexed and confused, Jesus first walks alongside or with us. He wants to listen to what is bothering us first. Then The Lord starts to encourage us. How? Simply by the word. Jesus broke down the scriptures for them. Then their eyes were open. They wanted Jesus to be with them and they wanted to be with Jesus. The word opens up our desire to be with Jesus. "Stay with us because it's almost the evening of our lives".

When you have reached the evening of your life and darkness is falling. When we are ailing, confused, questioning events in our country and the world, let alone in our own lives, turn to the Word! Turn to Jesus who is the Word... that Word who is from the beginning, as John 1 says.

On that Road to Emmaus, Jesus knew what He was doing with these disciples. After explaining the word to them, he kind of left them wanting more. He pretended to walk on when they got to their destination, but they invited him to come home with them. They were endeared to Jesus. With this stranger, they found themselves comfortable and comforted. That's what Jesus does.

When we open up to Him, we don't know why, but we start feeling better. So invite Him home - don't just leave Him at church.

Then Jesus reveals Himself to them by the breaking of bread. The Table of the Lord tells of His deep love for us, and invites us into the Body - we are not alone. At the Table, we are assured that we not only have Jesus, but we have each other. Sitting at the Lord's table tells us we are okay. We are more than okay - we have more than we need. Sitting at the Lord's Table opens our eyes to things beyond us, beyond our mundane questions and cares of this world... and it's memes. What we see is the Risen Christ who had gone to the Cross to set us free to live an abundant life, empowered to live and proclaim the Good News in word and deed. We see each other at the Table and from the Table we are sent together to proclaim God's Truth, God's Righteousness and God's Justice in the world! The Table of The Lord is powerful and empowers all who partake.

Jesus opened their eyes, and once they saw, they were empowered by the Table and the Truth... and then He could leave. Remember he said to the woman at the tomb. "Don't hold on to me." One way of understanding that statement today is, "Woman, you don't need a crutch." When Jesus disappeared from that Table in Emmaus, He was saying, "I've opened your eyes, made real your faith, and now you don't need me as a crutch. Go and be! Go and live that faith in the Risen Christ! Today, Jesus wants to get us to that point! Empowered to live boldly and to, as he says in Matthew 5:16 "Let our light so shine before all, that they may see our good works and glorify God." Our light burns. Our heart burns.

Let's conclude with the burn. The two said, "But didn't our hearts burn within us as we heard him speaking on the road?" When Jesus touches your life there comes a burning in your breast. We cannot keep it quiet. There's an urgency to proclaim the Risen Christ. They had said that it was getting late, but when Jesus opened their eyes and they identified the source of that burning, they couldn't be quiet and go to sleep. That same hour, says the text, they got up and rushed to Jerusalem to tell the others. This burning is "excitement, but also an overwhelming sense of joy." When we have the burning, we start to tell everybody. We don't have to look for the words. That excitement, which is not from us but from the very heart of God, will catapult us into the world to tell the story. To tell the truth. To speak truth to power. And that in spite of us and our shortcomings, like it was with Peter in the Acts text today. He felt the burning by the Spirit and proclaimed it, even if he was "just a fisherman" or had denied Jesus three times. We don't need to be perfect. Only God is perfect. The hearers were cut to the heart, and 3,000 were added to the movement of Jesus. The message is clear: Did y'all hear the news? Christ is Risen.