

What's To Eat?
Luke 24:36-48
Third Sunday of Easter
April 15, 2018
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Luke 24:36-48 (NRSV)

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

³⁶ While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."^[a] ³⁷ They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸ He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.^[b] ⁴¹ While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶ and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah^[c] is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses^[d] of these things.

I'm experiencing "enlightenment," THIS Easter season (as we go towards Pentecost,) as I re-reading the post-resurrection moments in Scripture. If you're like me, it feels like we're visiting a fact-checking website to clarify "what the heck just happened."

During this time of hearing first-hand-faith stories, like last week's awe-revealing moments with the doubting-disciple, Thomas, we are "walking" with two other disciples (not of the inner circle but surely, followers) of Jesus as they leave Jerusalem for home.

Not only is the Passover festival over...so are the hopes (it seems) of many of Jesus' followers. Thankfully, Luke's gospel moves us from the despair of the crucifixion down the road to real HOPE.

Like he did Thomas, Jesus is going to lead Cleopas and the other guy (maybe we could "put-in-OUR-OWN names-here") through discouragement to faith.

And, because we're being careful to not fall FROM awe to complacency, we have to remember that the resurrection caused a mixture of ecstasy and misery. While some believers had an explosion of joy, others seemed to have erosion of hope.

Easter came and some folks missed it.

It happened in Jerusalem.

It happens here.

Christ arose and not even all of his close followers realized his presence.

Some people always miss Easter.

What about us?

For whatever reason, did we miss Easter this year?

Let me be clear, I'm not asking if you were in worship (anywhere) Easter Sunday.

My concern is: are we missing an experience with the resurrection?

We may have heard the choir's anthem and saw the kiddos bringing balloons; we realized the words and the celebration fun, but we just didn't feel warmed up hearts.

Maybe you heard the Scripture readings and they failed to germinate meaning for you.

There's a character in the Last Temptation of Christ who says,

"God forgive me . . . this year . . . I have not felt Christ rise."

Is that someone you know?

Well, if you caught the message "Christ is Risen, He is risen indeed" and have been emboldened to share that with others; you are blessed; continue to act on your faith!

But, if you missed Easter, I pray Christ's message that HE understands, is a truth for you.

We don't have to *understand* Easter to *experience* Easter.

And Christ understands gets that about US.

That's why he walked with those disciples to Emmaus.

That's why he came into that locked room for Thomas and all the others.

Jesus seems to be saying "Enough! You may have been frightened. Yes, the last time you saw me I was dead, but I'm NOT dead now; look at the wounds."

And they were all filled with joy, Scripture says, AND STILL THOUGHT HE WAS A GHOST!

So, the real, LIVE Jesus tries again.

I hear a sigh of resignation (*"what can I say" he thinks*) as he throws out: "Have you got anything to eat?"

Seems like Jesus is practicing something he preached when he told us all to come to God's Kingdom like a child.

How many times a day do our kids and grandies look at us and say "What's to eat?"

Just like real life, Jesus, in resurrected life, needs something to eat and He wants US to feed him!

The One who fed 5000...

The One who served his Last Supper...wants us to respond.

The disciples offered him some fish. (Guess they had been paying attention!) And he eats the fish. That's no ghost!

He's making a connection for them: he's alive!

But, **we'd better** pay attention to the NEXT "what happens next."

Scripture tells us that (specifically for the disciples in Emmaus and implied for those behind the locked door) "he opened their minds to understand" the Law and the Prophets.

Jesus' hunger wasn't just physical; to be fed with fish or bread.

Jesus's hunger, in resurrection, is the same kind of *hunger* he had **before** the resurrection.

And it wasn't for a fish-wich!

Because the religious "authorities" had really fallen short.

They hadn't been applying the Torah and they weren't leading the people to a deeper understanding of God's Word; and folks weren't "eating up" (pardon the pun) the Law and the words of the Prophets, and God's people (and the application of God's rules; especially the Big 10) were causing separation from God's ideas, instead of bringing them ALL together.

That's why Jesus is hungry.

//In Luke's words that we heard today, the word "peace" means more than what we think it means.

It's difficult to translate to English but ***shalom*** *peace* means to express "that all is well with the world."

When we offer "shalom" to someone, we're saying "I want all to be well in your world."

That it's ALL just, ALL fair, ALL the way that God means it to be.

And as Easter people we should be saying, "What **AM I** doing to make the world look more like God's world than *any* modern government or corporation?"

Jesus is different!

He's hungry for freedom from religious constraints...for the shalom peace and justice for ALL people, not just some.

He'd made that a clear in his ministry, right?

The hungry were supposed to be fed; the naked given clothing?

Jesus had sat with the all kinds of marginalized people.

And he came, humbly, before and after in his resurrection appearances, without fanfare.

He was mistaken for the gardener or a ghost; he walked on a dusty road.
He appears in the midst of people that didn't even realize they were supposed to be looking.
The sightings of Jesus after the resurrection and the simple routine of needing something to eat were common.

We don't have to *expect* a dramatic setting or trumpet blowing greeting (at least not until his second coming,) BUT WE SHOULD acknowledge that connection between meeting Christ and having first-hand, self-understanding that he is alive.

In a world that's consumed with power struggles;
In churches where we're always seeking the "next big thing" to attract people to join us;
In places where sometimes we're just too darned legalistic about lines - in the parking lots or who can or can't... do whatever...
When WE ARE SOMETIMES TOO CONSUMED WITH OURSELVES INSTEAD OF THE real meaning of *shalom*...

...Couldn't we just have our "eyes opened to understanding" that Jesus is present as a stranger, a prisoner or beggar; he's the prostitute and the tax collector; he's even taught us about our relationship to the land in his parables; and he watches us to challenge the systems of justice; of what's right.

Dear Ones, it's not hard to see that AFTER

- being raised from the dead
- and gone
- and then returned
- **and** back with us for all eternity that Jesus, who we're supposed to witness about in all we do...and all we say...wants MORE THAN A PIECE OF FISH when he says to US, "**I'm hungry**; Have you got something to eat?"

The post-resurrection commission that Luke wrote for US is this:

That "Repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed...to all nations, all persons, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things."

We don't have to go to Jerusalem; I'll add: "Beginning from Pikes Peak United Methodist Church."

Are we witnesses to these things that Jesus is hungry for?

Is it possible that SHALOM is what Jesus is hungry for?

That "Shalom" isn't a greeting, but is a request?

A command?

Are we prepared to give him the Shalom he talks about AND DIED FOR?

Or are we just gonna give him a piece of "broiled fish?"

Christ challenges us when we need challenging!

He warns us and affirms us and loves us AND corrects us when we need those things.

Our first-hand faith is walking alongside Christ NOW: sometimes on a dusty road, and he'll take us how we are, show us where we ought to be, and help us get there.

If we missed Easter, please don't miss the truth about Christ.

Allow him to help you have better understanding.

And then, walk with your "commission papers" to be in ministry, 'cause our unity WITH Christ can't be separated from our commission FROM Christ.

Sharing the gospel and caring for people are non-negotiables for US, who've found, or been found by, the Easter experience.

The commission of Christ is for both those looking for something to do, and those who think they're already too busy.

Even if we missed Easter this year, (for whatever reason) live in discovery of the risen Christ, whenever it occurs, and PROCLAIM, with so many others who have gone before us, **"Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!"**

Amen!