Sermon 3rd Sunday in Easter

Text: [Luke 24:13-35](http://www.lectionarypage.net/YearA_RCL/Easter/AEaster3_RCL.html#gsp1) **Theme:** We have real hope!

 Do you feel like life had given you more than you could handle? Has the present situation deeply disappointed you? Do you feel lost? Is your world turned upside down? We are all tempted to say Yes! Yes indeed!

 Today we are all wrestling with the big questions. “What’s next? Where do we go? What do we do?” We remember a time when everything was just all right. Life was working out the way we planned. But now things have changes. It seems like overnight. For many………life has been shattered!

#  If so, then we know what it must have been like to be Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus. This is such a gripping story, because in many ways, it is our own story… when we lose hope and the desire to move on because our dreams have been crushed, this story reminds us of hope. The living hope that we have in the Resurrection of Jesus. Listen to what Paul wrote to his friends at Corinth**. 1 Corinthians 15:19-20 (NIV)19If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.20But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep.**

**We have Hope. Real Hope!**

 Within this story is a template that describes a journey. It is from Jerusalem to Emmaus and back to Jerusalem. It’s a journey Cleopas and his companion take and it’s a journey each of us is taking, or will take. It’s not, however, a one-time journey. It’s a journey we take again and again. I am not talking about Jerusalem and Emmaus as particular geographical locations. I am talking about this in a symbolic way. The journey God takes us on. To help us see what we real need**. We need Hope! Real Hope!**

 So, come with me now. On the journey. **Now, on that same day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14They were talking with each other about all of these things that had happened. 15While they were talking and discussing this, Jesus himself approached and began to walk along with them. 16But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17He said to them, “What are you talking about as you walk along?” Saddened, they stopped. 18One of them, named Cleopas, answered him, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” 19“What things?” he asked them. They replied, “The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet, mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. 20The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death. And they crucified him. 21But we were hoping that he was going to redeem Israel. Not only that, but besides all this, it is now the third day since these things happened. 22Also some women of our group amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning. 23When they did not find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. 24Some of those who were with us went to the tomb. They found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him**.”

 Have you ever noticed that some of the saddest words in our language begin with the letter D? For example, **disappointment, discouragement, doubt, despair, defeat and death.**

 All of these “D” words sum up beginning of the journey of Cleopas and his companion. What they shared with the unrecognized stranger on the Emmaus road. They had left the demoralized and confused group of disciples with the events of Good Friday fresh in their memories.

 We can understand their confusion, can’t we? The Master they had loved and followed had been horribly put to death on a Roman cross. Death by crucifixion was the most shameful of deaths; the victim was made a public spectacle, exposed to the jeers of all that passed by.

 Only a week before, on Palm Sunday, the hopes of the disciples had risen to fever pitch when the excited crowds had hailed their Master as the longed-for deliverer from the tyranny of Roman occupation…  but now he lay dead in a sealed tomb! Their hopes were dashed… the dream was over! They had hoped Jesus was the one, but he’s dead. And there’s a part of them that’s been lost, a part of them that died with Jesus. They had heard rumors that [**he was alive**](https://interruptingthesilence.com/2017/04/16/good-morning-now-go-home-an-easter-sunday-sermon-on-matthew-281-10/) but it all sounded like a “wild story”. There was nothing to keep them in Jerusalem. **Their lives had been shattered.**

 I don’t know why they chose to go to Emmaus, but I’ve known times when I just wanted to get away, when any place was better than where I was. Any place would be better than Jerusalem.

 Is Emmaus our journey to escape from all this….yes this virus? The Devil temps us to throw our hand in the air and say…why bother! Look here! I have something to help you fill the void! Look at what I can offer…….. alcohol, the filth of the internet…anger…….hostility……even against God! Why not turn away…..he has left you didn’t he! Yes…. right here on the journey, didn’t he promise to be with you always? Where is he now? Just let the sin take over. Why not? It has to be better then what we are going through now. Right?

 Do you remember the “D” words? “**disappointment, discouragement, doubt, despair, defeat and death”** The devil will try to convince us that we are a lost, that we will never be able to overcome this failure! The “D’s” of despair and doubt can weaken us. In a weaken state that the devil will often exert double force. That is to say that when we are physically exhausted or run-down, mentally drained, emotionally frazzled, or simply physically sick, the devil is aware of this and may even attack us more forcefully. In other words, we are on a journey in the middle of a war-zone!

 **But wait! Look!** On this journey someone has joined us. Who is it? Jesus himself. Let’s look at the story again!

**He said to them, “How foolish you are and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and to enter his glory?” Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village where they were going, he acted as if he were going to travel farther. But they urged him strongly, saying, “Stay with us, since it is almost evening, and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he reclined at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and began giving it to them. Suddenly their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. Then he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us along the road and while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?” They got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. They found the Eleven and those who were with them assembled together. They were saying, “The Lord really has been raised! He has appeared to Simon.” They themselves described what had happened along the road, and how they recognized him when he broke the bread.**

 What we may not know at the time, and what Cleopas and his companion did not know, is that Jesus came to them to show them the way. The way back from the “D” of **disappointment, discouragement, doubt, despair, defeat and death”** The way back to life. Real Hope!

 Right there! In the Bible. He opened it up and shared it with them. While they walked, they listened. And they received a wonderful blessing! God’s Word. **Food for the soul indeed!** The message that our sin is forgiven. All is finished. We are right with God because the Messiah came and fulfilled God’s plan

 It was now evening. They had arrived at their destination. Time for supper. They invited the guest to say and eat with them.

Hunger is more than physical, it also spiritual and emotional. We are by nature hungry. We hunger for life, love, wholeness, community, meaning, purpose. That hunger is surely the reason they strongly urged Jesus, “Stay with us.” Jesus would not only stay with them…. he would feed them. The guest they invited to their table would become their host.

 “When [Jesus] was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him.” They **recognized him** as the one they had left for dead in Jerusalem. They **recognized him** as the one who had accompanied them on the road to Emmaus. They **recognized him** as the one they had hoped for. And with his teaching they understood what they really needed to hope for! A Savior from the biggest **“D”** of them all**. Death!** A Savior who gives us his perfect life. A Savior indeed! Where our real hope should be. Needs to be.

 As we continue on in the journey of our life. The “D’s” of **disappointment, discouragement, doubt, despair, defeat and death”** will continue. The shattering, the breaking, the struggle will be there. We cannot escape it. But on the journey, we have Jesus. He is there to given us a new life, new hope , new purpose. Where is this found? In the community, hospitality, and love we share together. Is not that why we gather, right now, right here, to receive the food we need. The real Hope! [**8**](http://biblehub.com/psalms/34-8.htm)**Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed are they who takes refuge in him. AMEN**