

Introduction

Check-in & Introductions

Emmaus Days

Gospel Lesson

Luke 24: 13-25 (NRSV)

¹³Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸Then 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?" ¹⁹He 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, ²⁰and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹But 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. ²²Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³and 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. ²⁴Some 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." ²⁵Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared!

Sermon Focus

In this week's sermon, Pastor Andy talked about "Emmaus Days". All of us have "Emmaus Days" where our spiritual senses are very much in tune with God, and we recognize the presence of Christ everywhere. In order to get to Emmaus, the disciples had to walk through their confusion and grief. And even though they weren't aware of His presence, Jesus walked with them. Similarly, we have to walk through days of confusion and grief in this "stay at home" season in order to arrive at our "Emmaus" experiences.

Discussion Questions

1. Our sermon this week talked about the change in the pace of life that we are experiencing in our current season. What do you like about this pace? Where do you struggle with this pace?
2. How have you experienced time differently in the past 6 weeks?
3. Has anyone intentionally practiced mindfulness (or known someone who has)? Can you describe your practices and experience?
4. For those who are retired, what was your experience with time? Did time speed up? Did time slow down?
5. Has your definition of what's essential in your life, changed (in this season or another)?
6. Pastor Andy describes "Emmaus Days" as days when our eyes have been opened to

recognize God with us, days when the presence of Christ has been very easy to perceive. Share an Emmaus Day that you've had.

Bible Focus

The story of the road to Emmaus is profoundly important to the Christian Tradition. Our basic worship liturgy, order of worship, comes from this story (see page 14 of *The United Methodist Book of Worship*).

This story is also full of other examples of the dynamic nature of scripture. In the Emmaus story, we see expressions of grief. The text says that when the disciples were asked what they were talking about, they "stood still, looking sad." The Bible makes clear that God is big enough for all human emotions. That God sits with us in our grief and can handle it. We need not pray our sadness away, make excuses for it, or put on a happy face. The risen Christ walks with us in our pain and trauma even if we are unaware of his presence.

Among the "order of worship" in this story, we see the act of communion. Jesus shares the bread with his company. Communion is an act we should approach mindfully, if possible. Of course, all are welcome to the table no matter their mindset, but it is in our mindfulness, our slowing down, that we may perceive and witness the risen Christ among us. The table itself calls for mindfulness. When we gather in the name of Christ, we can come as we are, but we should do so with reverence and mindfulness if we can. And if we worship or approach the table in our grief, we may rest in the assurance that Christ is still there.

Discussion Questions

1. How long has it been since you have taken communion?
2. When they arrived at Emmaus, their new friend broke bread and then the disciples recognized this person as Jesus. Have you ever been sitting with someone, in that slower, mindful pace, and realized you were sitting with Christ?
3. Reflect on the idea that God can handle all of our emotions. Have you always believed this?

Prayer

Holy, holy, holy, God. We ask that you slow our pace, so that we may experience your presence more fully (*pause*). Where there is grief and fear, send your Spirit to reside with us. Wherever we are, Lord, connect us, and bind us together and with you (*pause*). Pull our attention back into the present moment, let us feel our breath in our lungs (*pause*). Help us to taste our next meal with holy reverence, remembering the meal you share with us. Gather us back together, as your body, in gratitude and thanksgiving, we pray. Amen.

"It is good to remember that the presence of God in our lives does not depend upon our awareness. God is with us, whether we know it or not. Jesus is alive, whether we see him or not. The Holy Spirit is at work, whether we can feel her or not."