

April 14, 2024

Third Sunday of Easter

Luke 24:36b-48

At this point in the lectionary, we read some of Luke's accounts people have had with the resurrected Jesus. Luke writes much later than Mark and may have used some of Mark's material for his Gospel. People have been telling the story of Jesus's resurrection for some time now. It would actually be decades already. People have had a chance to think about the whole idea of resurrection. Many questions have formed in their minds about the idea. Like what did Jesus look like after He rose from the dead? Was His body the same as it was before? How could He walk through walls and eat grilled fish? Was He a ghost? Luke in his research tries to put those questions to rest. Scholars believe that the similarities between Luke's and John's accounts of these encounters with the Risen Lord is that both reach back to an earlier traditional account of what happened. As believers two thousand years later, we can take great comfort in that idea.

The Gospel this morning tries to put the believers mind at ease about the questions that have surfaced about the resurrected Jesus. This is a bizarre Gospel encounter. This is the same Jesus but He is very different. Scholars have noticed an interesting pattern in telling this Gospel story. It is similar to Luke's story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus. They follow what is called the 5E's. Encounter- and the failure to recognize Jesus. Explanation- interpreting the resurrection through the lens of scripture. Eating- Jesus breaks bread or eats fish. Enlightenment- the disciple's eyes are opened, their hearts burn and they recognize Jesus. Exit- Jesus departs.

In the story of Emmaus two disciples are returning home. They believe that the woman's report of Jesus's resurrection is an idle report. Then they encounter a stranger on the road. They tell Him about the recent events and the women's report. The stranger notices that they are slow to believe the women's report. Then He uses prophecy to help them believe the report. Jesus tries to explain to them what happened to Him and what is happening now. They invite the stranger to eat with them. At the breaking of the bread they are enlightened and their eyes are opened and their hearts burn. They realize that they were speaking with the Risen Lord. Then Jesus exits and vanishes from their eyes!

In this morning's Gospel the disciples are gathered. They encounter Jesus as He stands in the midst of them. The disciples are not sure what is happening. They kind of make the connection that this is Jesus. This is a bizarre encounter. Then Jesus explains what is happening. He offers them His hands and His feet and the wounds from the crucifixion. Then He asks them if they have any food to eat. Then Jesus eats some broiled fish and honeycomb. Then at verse 44 Jesus enlightens them. He explains the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms and how they all explain the events of His crucifixion, death and resurrection. Jesus's exit in this story is actually an account of His ascension!

As believing Christians the 5E's are still occurring for us two thousand years on. Each week we encounter the Risen Christ in our worship. In the reciting of scripture and preaching we are offered explanations proclaiming the Good News. For the next four weeks we will continue to eat with Christ at the breaking of the bread at His table. The Holy Spirit brings enlightenment by opening our hearts and minds and lighting the flames of inspiration within us. Finally, the exit should be ours for Jesus Christ has sent us out into the world to be witnesses to His Good News. God Bless you all and have a prayerful week, Pastor D