

Luke 24:13-35  
ILCW A—Easter 3  
April 23/26, 2020 at Peace, Wautoma

The part of God's Word we will think about for a little while this morning is recorded in the gospel according to Saint Luke, chapter 24, verses 13 to 35. Let us pray. Now may the God of hope fill you with complete joy and peace as you continue to believe, so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Dear brothers and sisters walking on the road to Emmaus with Jesus,

Put yourselves into the sandals of those two disciples as they left Jerusalem for the 7 mile walk back to Jerusalem that first Easter evening. How do you feel? What do you think? Why are you feeling and thinking that way? Who do you believe? Where do we individually and as a church go from here? What does it all mean? Is Jesus alive or dead? When confusion and sadness ruled the day, these two disciples got the assurance of a lifetime. "Now, on that same day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about all of these things that had happened." The Savior would walk with them to give them the strength they needed. As those first disciples begged, so do we. **Stay with us, Lord, to clear our minds and to calm our hearts!**

**Stay with us, Lord, to clear our minds!** Has your mind been a bit cloudy or cluttered lately? Do you feel like you are trying to think through a fog? I couldn't imagine why that would be the case. Living through a pandemic will do that to you. Depression dogs us. Anxiety bites at the ankles of our brains. Isolation does strange things to our minds. We are not wired to be solitary creatures. We are restless. We want answers instead of uncertainty. We want facts instead of rumors. We want information we can trust.

Things haven't changed much in the 2,000 or so years since that first Easter evening, have they? These two disciples really needed reliable information they could trust. "He said to them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" Saddened, they stopped. One 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?" These men, like us, wanted normalcy. They wanted certainty. They wanted resolution.

And on this walk, they would get it! Jesus gave these two disciples the beautiful, incontrovertible facts (and evidence!) their minds so desperately needed. "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." How did the rest of the conversation go? We know it, because it is the conversation God has with his people each time we worship or read his Word.

Jesus clears our minds with the message of his love for us in the Scriptures. Our Savior became fully man by his incarnation. In that life, Christ fulfilled his mission as our holy substitute. Jesus

suffered and died on the cross to forgive all of our sins. He rose from the dead to guarantee his identity, his forgiveness and the everlasting life all who believe in him will share with him for all eternity. Put your mind at ease. No matter what happens, your sins are forgiven and you are going to heaven! Nothing can change that!

As those two Emmaus disciples pleaded with Jesus, so do we. Stay with us, Lord, no matter what! Clear our minds of disorder, selfishness and despair. Fill them instead with peace, trust and love for you and our neighbor. And in Jesus, we can be sure that prayer is answered all the time.

A clean desk makes for a more productive work area. Studies have proven it. In much the same way, a clear mind makes for a calm heart. Jesus clears our minds of all their distractions and doubts for just that reason. **Stay with us, Lord, to calm our hearts!**

Fear and frustration are frequent visitors in many hearts these days, even at times our own. Worry is a constant companion. Our hearts race. They fester with strange emotions, sometimes with many at the same time. We don't know what to do or how to get anything done. Our whole concept of normal is being revised. But letting the fear and frustration of COVID-19 control our hearts is a spiritual mistake.

Those two friends on the way to Emmaus that first Easter faced fear and frustration, too. "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. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be condemned to death. And they crucified him. But 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. Also some women of our group amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning. When 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. Some 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." What could all of this possibly mean? These two friends struggled to reconcile the Easter morning reports with the cold hard realities of life. Where was the truth in all of this?

Their dear friend and Savior Jesus, alive after death, walks with them to calm their hearts. "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?"

As he did for those Emmaus disciples, Jesus still does for us every single day, every moment of our lives, as often as we need him. In his Word, Jesus stays with us no matter what. Jesus calms our fears. He wipes away our tears. He lives to convey his precious peace to us.

In this time of extreme uncertainty and anxiety, know that our Savior always stays with us for our peace and comfort. We can pray with those two disciples because we know Jesus' answer to them is also his answer to us. "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." In every age and circumstance of life, we have this confidence, dear Christian friends. Jesus stays with us to clear our minds and calm our hearts with the forgiveness of our sins and the eternal life in heaven only he can give. Stay with us Lord, and calm our every fear and frustration. Amen.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Amen.