

Daily Discipleship

Third Sunday of Easter (B) – Luke 24:36b-48

The Path of Discipleship: *Joined by Others*

Focus Question: *How might you bring the good news of Jesus to someone this week?*

word of life

“You are witnesses of these things.” Luke 24:36-48 (NRSV)

Read Luke 24:36-48

In Chapter 24, Luke describes the day of resurrection. After the women discover the empty tomb and hear about the risen Christ, they tell the disciples what they had witnessed. Peter runs to the tomb and finds it to be empty, just as the women had testified.

On that same day, Jesus walks the seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus with two of the disciples, but they do not recognize him. He explains the things that had happened in Jerusalem and relates those events to Scripture. After they reach Emmaus, he sits with them for a meal. He takes bread, blesses it and breaks it. Finally, in the breaking of bread, their eyes are opened and they recognize him, but he vanishes from them. With exuberant joy, the disciples return the seven miles to Jerusalem to tell the others about what they had witnessed.

It is while these disciples are telling the others about the events on the way to Emmaus that Jesus stands among them. He greets them, “Peace be with you.” (Luke 24:36 NRSV) Despite the testimonies of Mary and the two disciples who walk with Jesus, the disciples are terrified. They believe they are looking at a ghost of a dead person.

1. *What would it be like to see a ghost?*
2. *What makes the witness of Mary and the two disciples so unbelievable?*

Jesus appears not to be very understanding. He questions them about their fears and doubts. Hasn't he prepared them for this day through his teaching? Didn't they grasp any of what he taught them? Jesus allows them to touch him and feel his wounds. He still is made of bone and flesh. It is too much to grasp. They are filled with “joy in their disbelieving and wondering.” (Luke 24:41)

3. *What does it mean for the disciples to “have joy in their disbelieving and wondering?”*
4. *Is Jesus too hard on the disciples?*

Next, Jesus takes food and eats it. Ghosts don't eat food. Certainly, this action is convincing. Just like on the path to Emmaus, Jesus begins to teach about the laws of Moses, prophets, and psalms, but in a new way, identifying himself as the fulfillment of all that had been written. Finally, their minds are opened and they understand. The death and resurrection of Jesus is needed so that repentance and forgiveness of sins can be proclaimed.

Now that the disciples have witnessed the resurrected Christ, they are commissioned by Jesus: “You are witnesses of these things.” (Luke 24:48 NRSV) These words are repeated by Jesus at the time of his Ascension, “You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8 NRSV) This story of resurrection and forgiveness is not to be hidden, but proclaimed.

5. *How could the disciples not have told others about these unbelievable events?*
6. *What might have prevented the disciples from being witnesses?*

word among us

It is important to place this passage in its context. If you are not familiar with the walk with Jesus to Emmaus in Luke 24:13-35, take time to review it. Note the parallels to Luke 24:36-48. Take a moment to envision yourself in the scene.

1. *Where do you find yourself --*

With those who raced from Emmaus in order to tell the disciples about the risen Jesus?

With those who were startled and afraid at the sight of Jesus?

With Jesus, the one who teaches and inspires?

Consider in your own life those individuals who resemble the disciples from Emmaus, ones eager to share the good news of Jesus. Take a moment to write down names of key people who have tried to share Jesus with you (even if you were not receptive). Imagine what it would be like to have Jesus or some great teacher of the faith teach you, opening your mind to understand the scriptures.

2. *What questions might you ask Jesus about scripture?*

3. *If you could spend a few hours with someone skilled in teaching the Bible, whom would you choose? Why?*

After all his teachings on this first Easter evening, Jesus commissions his followers, “You are witnesses of these things.” (Luke 24:48 NRSV) There seems to be no choice about the matter. They have witnessed unique events. Their voice is needed to tell the story to others. This is not a private instruction to be kept under a bushel.

4. *What obstacles did the disciples face as they bore witness to Jesus?*

5. *How do our minds get closed to God?*

Take a few moments to prayerfully consider others whom you might invite to walk with you on the path of discipleship. Write down those names. It is not necessary for you to understand all of scripture and theology in order to walk with people in their own faith journey.

6. *Who do you pray might have their minds and hearts opened to the message of Jesus?*

7. *How might God use you as a witness?*

We do not have the opportunity to physically touch the hands and feet of Jesus, nor to watch him eat food. Yet the Holy Spirit is still at work, opening our minds, spirits and hearts to walk the path of discipleship by faith. It is the Holy Spirit who calls, gathers and enlightens us. That same very Spirit nudges and empowers us to be a vibrant witness to Christ. Jesus extends peace to disciples of every generation as they continue the work of the Holy Spirit.

8. *How might the Holy Spirit be nudging you this week?*

Prayer

Creator of all, thank you for creating community and giving us companions to walk the path of discipleship. Ignite us to be your witnesses. Amen

Dig Deeper

Luke 24:1-36a

last word

Choose someone to pray for and walk with during the next 30 days.



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Written by John and Robin McCullough-Bade

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