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 3rd Sunday of Easter

***Let's Talk to Jesus***  
***Luke 24:13-35***

*Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles[f] from Jerusalem, 14 and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15 While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16 but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17 And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad.[g] 18 Then 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?" 19 He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth,[h] who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, 20 and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.[i] Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. 22 Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23 and 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. 24 Some 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." 25 Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26 Was it not necessary that the Messiah[j] should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" 27 Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures. 28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29 But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. 30 When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us[k] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" 33 That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" 35 Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

Imagine you are in the Reasor's grocery store this week,  
in the middle of this pandemic, wearing your mask,  
staying in your row going in one direction,  
six feet away from the next person,

And a stranger comes up to you—about 1 foot away—and asks,  
***'Why are you wearing a mask?'***  
***Why are you so far away from everyone—you worried about something?***

You would be shocked, right?  
You would probably say,  
***look buddy—are you the only person*** in this grocery store  
who hasn't heard about the COVID-19 pandemic?  
***Where have you been—under a rock?***

Kind of like Cleopas and his companion would have been feeling  
when Jesus comes up beside them on their journey home, saying:  
***"What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?"***  
*They stood still, looking sad.*<sup>[8]</sup>  
*18 Then Cleopas...answered him,*  
***"Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have***  
***taken place there in these days?"***  
*19 Jesus asked them, "What things?"*

Geez. What things? What do you mean?  
Didn't you hear and see that horrific arrest, beating,  
and crucifixion of a completely innocent man—Jesus of Nazareth?

Kind of like someone asking us what's up  
with masks and six feet of separation!

Truth is, ***we are all in this crazy state of pandemic,***  
and we are all talking among ourselves about what is going on—all the time.  
We're constantly asking one other—  
have you heard the latest from CDC or the task force?  
What are you doing at your house?  
How are you handling a mask? Are you wearing gloves?  
We're all worried about how long this might go on,  
if there will just be a new normal!

*Do you ever wonder why Jesus would have asked such a silly question?*

Let's think about that.

What if he asks, because he wants to *start a real conversation*—  
something more than just what's your name and where are you going?

What if he asks the obvious question,  
so they have opportunity to *give their testimony*,  
so they can all have a *deeper conversation*,  
and *look at the bigger picture*?

*So that he can really explain—*

not only his own life, but all the scriptures about him?

*Maybe Jesus is NOT like the crazy person in Reasor's,*  
asking us about COVID-19 precautions!

But we would probably feel that way if we were Cleopas, right?

He has seen the crucifixion of Jesus—

His hopes are lost.

His dreams are shattered, just like so many of Jesus' followers.

*21 But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.*<sup>[i]</sup>

*Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.*

*How often have you felt like that?*

*We had hoped....*

I had hoped that was the answer to my prayers.

That this was a better relationship.

A new opportunity.

But NO.

*That's all of us right now, isn't it?*

We had hoped this was just a virus somewhere else in the world,  
not infecting the United States more than any other country on earth.

We had hoped this was not going to tank our economy,

or put millions out of work,

or stuck in their homes.

Just like Cleopas and his companion,  
 Even though some restrictions are lifted,  
*we are facing some feelings of frustration and despair*, aren't we?

*We are all grieving*---the loss of life as we knew it,  
 and a future that we cannot predict.

And, like Cleopas and his companion  
*we have heard differing accounts* of what's going on around us.  
 Different information about this pandemic,  
 And there's some confusion—like there was then:

*Moreover, some women of our group astounded us.*  
*They were at the tomb early this morning, <sup>23</sup>and 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.*

*So, what does this story say to us today—in 2020?*

What if it says *let's TALK TO JESUS*—right now, during this pandemic?  
 What if it's reminding us that when we pour out our hearts to Him, Jesus *listens*?  
 And, He *offers us good news*!

What if Jesus *reveals Himself* in the scriptures still today?  
 What if He *explains his life and mission* to us, today?  
 And what if *He offers himself in the breaking of bread*, in communion?

*I wonder, how MIGHT YOU TALK to Jesus*—today, this week?  
 How might we use some of our time to talk to Jesus?

And if Jesus were to appear to us—and I believe He often does---  
 and if he heard your worries, fears, and thoughts—  
*what do you think He would say to you?*

What *stories in the Bible might he remind you of*?  
 Are there stories that are already coming to your heart and mind?

*And what about communion?*  
 We are not having traditional communion online,  
 but what about the virtual communion?

Were you able to participate during Holy Week?  
 Are you ready to participate today?  
 Has it been meaningful in a new way because you are doing it at home?  
 Isn't it true that sometimes our eyes are opened,  
 in the breaking of bread?

***And what about your heart burning?***

When has your heart burned within you—  
 Because you knew that Jesus was talking to you?

You know, I've heard of people spending more *time outdoors*  
 lately....gardening, cleaning up the yard, talking long walks.

***What if some of that time could be "Jesus time"—***

Time to **pour out** our hearts to Jesus,  
 And time to just **listen** to Him.

I think that we are all finding that we have more opportunity  
***to be with our own thoughts these days.***

And sometimes that's uncomfortable—  
 because we might be facing some fears and worries,  
 or we start to take stock of our lives.  
 It can be **challenging** to be alone with yourself, right?

***But, it can also be life-giving.***

What if we used our time alone,  
 to be **supported, and encouraged, and loved** by Jesus?  
 What if we **surrendered some of our quiet time**—  
 instead of always filling it with news, or podcasts, or books?

We **tend to fill our quiet time with too much stuff**—  
 just like our **days** are often crammed with too many activities.  
 Our **minds** get crammed too!

***So what if we spent some time ALONE***—indoors, or outdoors,  
 sitting quietly, or walking ...  
 and what if we just focused on one thing, one person—Jesus.  
 What if we looked at a candle, or a bird,  
 or as my dad used to say the back of our eyelids,  
 and we just **quietly listened for what Jesus might want to share with us?**

Can you make time for that? Today? This week?  
I believe it can and will be life-changing!

*I'm NOT saying it's easy.*

*When we're all alone with our thoughts, we often have racing thoughts!*

And our attention spans are all a bit attention-deficit these days, right?

We want to take in info in little sound 'bytes', not big chunks.

*But Jesus doesn't usually speak to us in little bytes.*

Jesus speaks on long walks, like the Road to Emmaus,

Which was a 7-mile journey.

Jesus speaks about *big topics*, like the scriptures about himself.

And Jesus speaks in *deep ways*,

like he did when he appeared to Mary Magdalene on Easter morning!

*We can't cram in a bit of Jesus in 5 minutes a day.*

We need more than that.

I can't tell you exactly how much—but it's whatever amount of time is enough—

For you and Him to have a good conversation.

For you to receive His life-giving love and grace.

Whatever amount of time it takes

to *make your heart burn*, and *your eyes open*.

Maybe some of that time will be today, in communion.

That is the *Good News of the Gospel* for us today,

May we all take the time to **Talk to Jesus**,

In these crazy days and crazy times,

May we hear from him,

and allow our lives to be changed by Him.

For this, all God's people say, Amen.