

“Walking with Jesus – The Road to Emmaus”
Luke 24:13-35

Last week we celebrated the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This morning we heard the story narrated by Luke’s gospel known as the “Road to Emmaus.” This compelling story is a well-crafted drama that includes the emotions of sorrow, suspense, puzzlement and finally the fury of excited activity.

For me, the story of the “Road to Emmaus” is particularly meaningful because I have been on that road myself. I know I have walked my own Emmaus road throughout the journey of my life and I have recognized that Jesus has been walking with me, not necessarily at that time but more than likely after I have looked back in remembrance and recognition.

The encounter on the road to Emmaus is a story that brought change to the disciples. It is a story that change the disciple’s heart from grief and despair into comfort and joyful hearts. It is a story that speaks of loss, presence, invitation, communion and mission.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus had good portion of complete loss and despair. We find the disciples sad, gloomy, and fearful, perplex, scattered, defeated, and running with no mission or purpose. They were in desperate need of their teacher.

Jesus comes into their presence, but they do not recognize him. He listens to their tale of worries and torment as they told the story that was focused on the three past days, but Jesus’ story fit into the much larger story of God’s salvation plan for humanity which begins to turn their despair into joy and their gloom into hope.

As evening was drawing nigh, they decided to invite this stranger to spend the night with them. So the stranger entered their house and was seated at the table. And when it came to bless the food and share it, he did so by taking the bread, bless it and also took the cup of drink, bless it and share it with them.

When the disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread, everything changed for them. Jesus shared meal several times during his ministry. He fed and ate with the 4000 and 5000; he ate with Matthew in his house; he called Zacchaeus down from a tree to share meal in his house; he ate at Mary and Martha’s place and of course the last supper. We saw in the gospels few times after Jesus resurrection sharing meal with the disciples. He shared meal in Emmaus; Jesus even cook breakfast for the disciples on the shores of Tiberias. When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw that a charcoal fire was burning and the fish were frying over it, and there was bread, and Jesus served them with bread and fish. The same special menu he used to feed the 5000 people.

I want to invite you this morning to consider the story of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, within the context of the Holy meal that we Christians partake and living a life as one means for coming to some measure of peace with the changes ahead of our lives and the Church.

Jesus is not going to force himself upon us; he will wait to be invited in. The invitation is the expression of our desire for a lasting good relationship with Jesus. We invite him into all our emotional reactions that is born of the dangers going around us.

Take bread, bless it, break it and give it. It seems very ordinary and yet reveals the truth about a God who came to serve and a God who wishes to have relationship with us that is so intimate that we become one body, mind, and spirit. This sharing of the holy meal is what Jesus want us to do and to be remembered.

When we are at this table, there is a recognition that God wishes to enter into communion with us. Our hearts yearn for this sense of belonging and we only look for it from God and nowhere else like some do in the glamour of money, material things and the physical beauty of people. This Holy Communion is not only with God but with each other. All of us who eat of one bread, and drink of the one cup, become one as well. We will become a community; a community of believers.

As Christians, sharing meal is one of the ways we are connected to the community. Whenever we are sharing meal, we become Church together in a place of hope and love. Gathering to share a meal of bread and wine offers a profound declaration at the core of the Christian faith. In Africa, whenever you visit people, food is shared to show hospitality. People share food together as a family unit and friendship. The visible reality that is shared in the meal is God's grace, his gracious initiative in redeeming us through the death and resurrection of our Lord. This grace is the free and loving gift by which he offers people a share in his life, and shows us his favor and will for our salvation. Our response to the grace of God's initiative is itself a grace or gift from God by which we can imitate Christ in our daily lives.

Christ is risen from the dead! Christ is our savior! Christ is the total hope of this world! He is present in the world and in our sharing of the meal. It is through these God-given things that our faith is renewed, and restored. He promised to be with us always, to the very end of the age.

As we break bread together, we are reminded of God's love for us. As we hear his word and share meal at his table, and he meets with us, we will have the glory, grace and salvation promised to us. He want us to see him, to know his presence with us - not just here, but everywhere we go, in whatever situation we find ourselves. We should embrace the knowledge that Jesus is alive; that Jesus is with us; that God is fulfilling his promises, and will continue to do so. Just as Jesus met his disciples on the road to Emmaus and walk with them, so we Christians will walk with the Lord, when we keep our eyes open to see him and listen to him in the still voice and above all meal in his remembrance.

Amen!