

Third Sunday of Easter  
Year A

Acts 2:14a, 36-41  
Psalm 116:1-3, 10-17  
1 Peter 1:17-23  
Luke 24:13-35

I touched on this story of the two disciples on their journey to Emmaus last week. Today, we can look at the story in more detail and discern what God is trying to tell us. What does this encounter with the risen Jesus say to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

These two disciples represent the dashed hopes of many of the followers of Jesus. They had seen Him as the promised Messiah, the one who would lead the uprising against the Romans and set them free, even as Moses had risen up to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. This was a hope shared by many in Israel throughout the 1st century. Others had come and tried, but none of the rebels had been successful. Now, it seemed like Jesus was another of the unsuccessful ones.

In their distress, these disciples had heard the tale of the women who had visited the tomb, but they didn't know what to think of it. They were dejected and on their way home. Along the way, these two were trying to make sense of all they had experienced, but were getting nowhere. Then, a stranger joined them. We know the rest of the story.

We might wonder why they were unable to see that it was Jesus who had joined them. We might be curious who the second disciple was who accompanied Cleopas. These are details that are not necessary to understand God's message. What we need to focus on is this encounter.

Jesus met the disciples where they were. He did not chastise them for not accepting the word of the women. He never asked them why they doubted what He had told them about the need for Him to suffer, die, and then be raised on the third day. Jesus merely explained the prophecies about Him. He opened their minds to the possibility that the ministry had not been in vain, that their faith in Him would be honored. Then, in the breaking of the bread, their eyes were opened and they understood.

The reaction of these two men is exactly what we would expect. Even in their tired state, they ran back to the city to tell their friends about their encounter with Jesus. They could not wait. Such news needed to be shared.

In the midst of all that is happening in our world today, God does not chastise us for lacking in faith that all will be well. We are not ridiculed for not expecting God to deliver us from all the hate and disease that is circulating around us. God is with us in all our distress. God is meeting us where we are and is inviting us to walk along side as we hear the prophecies of old and our eyes are opened to the possibilities of the future. While we may get discouraged when change doesn't happen quickly enough, we do know God is working with us.

Let us each seek the confirmation of God's presence with us as we experience our own encounter with the risen Jesus. And let us share that experience with others.