

*“Resist and Begin Again...A Blessed
New Normal”*

*“Walking Together Into A Blessed
New Normal”*

1 Peter 1:22-25; Luke 24:13-35
April 26, 2020
Third Week of Eastertide

Credit to the promptings of John Dominique
Crosson, The Power of Parable, and to a
sermon by I.G. Spong.

The notion of the dead...a bit scary...
we are so uncomfortable at wakes.

Well...gee, ghosts go Boo! And when
things bump around in the dark, we pull up
the sheets and hide!

And here we have Jesus...Dead
Man...Talking.

Makes me reflect on how so many of us so
much of the time walk around dead,
figuratively...dead inside, talking, but not
really living...hmmnn.

Scary to see it in others, scarier to recognize
that truth in myself.

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You would think it would have been scary
for those two on their way to Emmaus. And
then Jesus present...dead and all.

But, there is no evidence of fear here in this
story...or in any of the encounter stories
with the Risen Christ!

Ohhhh yeah...right! Jesus was not a dead
man!

He is the new human...a new creation.

He is the first of a new humanity.

God is doing a new thing in Jesus, in us...
a new thing for all time to come...
there's a blessed new normal every
day for us!

God is doing a new thing in YOU! In and
for humanity!

This parable lets us know: the place to meet
Christ is not out there somewhere else where
you “aren't” ...

but right here...wherever and however you
are...struggling,
confused, needing some hope...on the
journey to *your* Emmaus! He's come to
meet you.

The two walking the road have left a
frightening day and are tossing the events of
the day back and forth
trying to patch them together and make
sense of the whole story. They had hoped
He would redeem Israel.

Their hearts were burning...heartburn...high
anxiety time.

They were caught up in their fears, the
unknowns, trying to make sense of the
past...not really getting the meaning of their
own faith story...

the meaning of the now, not present to the
moment at hand.

The truth beneath the turbulence.
Jesus in their midst.

*And what does Jesus say as he comes upon
them,*

“What are you discussing?”

Really? That's it?

Is he just playing them, manipulating them, testing them in some way?

*Or, is he really amazed they still don't get it
and so really wonders what they could be tossing about given what has just happened?*

The story doesn't tell us...

but one thing is clear in the story...

*He listens to them....really listens to them...
to all they are saying and without interrupting.*

But still they can't make sense of it all. They are not able to see a new normal, let alone a blessed one...

the one right before their very eyes!

And *that's* when Jesus chooses to speak.

Jesus could have come upon them and scolded them for fleeing the city.

Given them a lecture about God's plan to bring Him back from the dead and what that's really about,

but instead, He listens to their story and how they feel and what they believe before He even says a word.

~When was the last time someone really listened *to you that way*...**heard you into speech**? Or, *you* truly listened to them?

~What was going on in your heart as you spoke and they listened? They spoke, and you listened?

Wasn't your heart burning?

And when Jesus does speak...what does He share with them? Get this!

Nothing of himself, not even a word of Himself.

He goes with the power of the story...

not His story, the story of their faith.

He doesn't bring attention to Himself...

Isn't melodramatic, looking for sympathy or power.

Instead of preaching at them or bringing attention to himself...he wants them to think.

To find meaning in the events of their lives by aligning them with the whole of the scripture's story...

that story now happening to them, happening in them!

I'm thinking He hoped that would be enough--they'd get it.

But even as their hearts burned,
their eyes were not open to the truth,
able to recognize the Christ right in front of them.

And you know, we're all more alike than we are different.

And so, we're invited to think using the power of this parable to nudge our thinking along...

Parables open meaning to us, don't confine it, define it.

And through this parable, we come to know, the *Scripture*—even interpreted by Jesus himself—will only take you just so far...do no more than create “burning hearts.”

This parable tells us: It is not Scripture but Eucharist - Communion that opens our eyes **and** our hearts.

In participating in this living sacrament...

Communion steps us beyond scripture, in that
we leave our heads to act from of our hearts...
bringing us together as never before.

In communion, we each get what we most need for the journey...not more, not less. We share
because we care.

It's in communion that we invite the stranger in,
call out to what's strange or strained in us and invite it in.

In communion, Jesus no longer a stranger.
Christ...is with us...in us! ...each of us!

Urgently, we come to see the Christ
in each stranger we encounter!

In this sacred act of communing, our eyes are opened to truth...often an uncomfortable truth.

Truth is when we see our mutuality, we cannot separate ourselves from each other's well-being
and that may put our individual physical safety literally at risk.

When “our souls are purified by obedience to that truth,
we **can act** from our genuine mutual love.

Love one another deeply from our burning hearts.” Timothy's word to us!

This story is a parable inviting us to find the heart of Jesus Christ within us.

Finding your new humanity...a universal call to love and live as never before. A humanity able to stand up and resist all the empires...to stand with each other as never before.

The ancient Christian intention and modern Christian meaning of this parable is found by saying:

“Emmaus never happened. Emmaus always happens.”

That is, this is a story that isn't historical...never happened but always does. When we are in communion one with the other: Our eyes and hearts open.

This story is about actively, demonstrating love, not talking about it or reading about it or thinking about it or hoping for it...rather,

doing love, caring for the stranger. Christ fully present.

This is a story of humanity finding itself in finding each other...and doing for, being there for, each other!

Holy, holy, holy!

In that one moment, in the breaking and sharing of the bread, when they recognize Him...He vanishes.

Did He slip away? Did He etherealize?

Well, we don't know...but we do know that in that moment of communion, they do get it!

...the power sharing a meal has to change everything!
(Bread and wine optional? Actively caring and sharing, not!)

They see because they reclaim the meaning of the story, the meaning of their lives...of life...of truth, of truly living...of humanity's existence as resistance...

Humanity's power to act in solidarity to redeem
“Israel”...Milwaukee, the US, ourselves.

On the way to Emmaus, they come to see life differently, see each other differently...the stranger differently.

They can Start Again...despite the risks.

“Jesus lives.” He is not simply dead and gone. But...
not only *does* “Jesus live, Jesus is Lord.”

He doesn't lord over you. He reigns with you!

There is no force in the universe more powerful
than the Lord Jesus Christ in you!

Did you hear that? ...in you! ...in us! We are so powerful!

So...

Start out again. Say: "Yes" to Christ and Say: "No" to the powers of empire tried to stop Him, stop you!

And the point of the story?**RELAX!**
You've got this!

Get it in perspective!

Stop giving your power away!

Remember who is Lord: Justice.

Be who you are called to be...no more/no less...relax.

On your life's journey...going to whatever Emmaus the road on which you have been traveling leads...get off!

Get off the road you've been traveling if it's taking you no where.

RELAX.
Start Again!

Sweet Darkness, by David Whyte, adapted

When your eyes are tired
the world is tired also.
When your vision is gone
no part of the world can find you.
So...
Time to go into the dark...
into the womb...on your own.
The dark, your holy womb this night.
There...in the sweet darkness, you can
be sure
you are not beyond love.
The night will give you a horizon
further than you can see.

You must learn one thing:
The world was made to be free in.
Give up all other worlds
except the one to which you truly
belong.
Sometimes it takes darkness
and the sweet confinement of your
aloneness
to learn...
anything or anyone
that does not bring you alive...
is too small for you. Start again.