



BIBLE STUDY EASTER 3A

Moments of revelation

Abstract

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 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.

Luke 24:25-27

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Moments of revelation

SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2020 | EASTER | THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
YEAR A

<i>First Reading</i>	Acts 2:14a, 36–41
<i>Psalm</i>	Psalm 116:1–4, 12–19
<i>New Testament</i>	1 Peter 1:17–23
<i>Gospel</i>	Luke 24:13–35

Luke 24.13-35

Two disciples walk back from Jerusalem to their home in Emmaus. They are in despair about the death of Jesus. Jesus appears and walks beside them, but they do not recognise him. He teaches them from the Scriptures, and they see who he is when he breaks bread with them.

This week's resources explore: how Jesus takes time to explain his own story.

A prayer of approach

Risen Saviour, risen Lord,
we come to you today.
We come to share in your story.
We come to feast with you.
We approach your throne with the knowledge
that you died for us and rose again.
Hallelujah, risen Lord Jesus.
Hallelujah. Amen.

Introduction

When you look at a text to preach from it, you do many things to help, but basically you try to place yourself in the text. There is a point in this process that says “**assume** makes an **ass** out of **u** and **me**” but then of course there is the old Advert line that says “But wait we have more”. The players in this drama assumed it was all over, but no, it is only a new beginning to a whole new story.

- Try to imagine what it would have been like to be so close to the events of the first Easter, and to find the resurrection of Jesus so surprising.
- Note how much faith and trust and meaning these early preachers and disciples find in the fact that Jesus is risen.

Karl Barth, one of the twentieth century's most famous theologians was on a streetcar one day in in the Swiss town where he lived and lectured. A tourist climbed on the streetcar and sat down next to Barth.

“Are you new to the city?” Barth inquired.
 “Yes,” said the tourist.
 “Is there anything you would particularly like to see in this city?” asked Barth.
 “Yes,” he said,
 “I’d love to meet the famous theologian Karl Barth. Do you know him?”
 “Well as a matter of fact, I do. I give him a shave every morning.” Barth replied,

The tourist got off the streetcar quite delighted. He went back to his hotel saying,
 “I met Karl Barth’s barber today.”

In the presence of the very person he most wanted to meet, that tourist never realized that the man with whom he was talking was the great man himself.

I think it would surprise us to know how often we miss the presence of Christ just as Cleopas and his brother missed the significance of the stranger on the road to Emmaus. It is likewise easy for us to miss the significance of the resurrection.

Reading

Luke 24:13–35 (NRSV)

¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles 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. 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, 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. 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 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 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.

Exegesis

In Luke’s Gospel, the risen Jesus makes his first appearance during these 10 to 12 kilometres walk from Jerusalem to Emmaus. Two disappointed and heartsick disciples are making their way home when Jesus himself comes and walks beside them. Their eyes are kept (literally, ‘held back’) from recognising him. We are not told who or what prevents them from knowing – it could be God’s direct action, or the trauma they have experienced in witnessing his death, or a combination of both.

Jesus asks them what they have been talking about as they walked along, and there follows the almost comical scene of Cleopas and his companion recounting the story of ‘Jesus of Nazareth’ to – Jesus of Nazareth! When he first asks them, though, they stand still ‘looking sad’, as if the horror of recent events has sapped all their energy. The word for ‘sad’ here could also be translated ‘angry’. Either way, they are overcome with deep emotion and say, ‘We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel.’ ‘Redeeming Israel’ could mean freeing Israel from Roman rule, but it could also indicate more far-reaching hopes, such as the idea that the Messiah would end all wars or bring about the end of time. Whatever they were hoping for, it all seems lost now.

Then the unrecognised Jesus begins to reframe their experience by explaining to them, from the Scriptures, that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer; it was in God’s plan and not a terrible accident. It is as if this unknown teacher takes their isolated beads of knowledge and re-strings them into a different sequence revealing a new pattern. Their hearts burn within them as they listen to him. It is this new knowledge, plus their own generous hospitality, that paves the way for the moment when they recognise him in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection Questions



When have you gathered round a fire (or similar) to tell/listen to stories?

- If you were to tell your own story, where would you begin?
- Where is Jesus in your story?

A sending out prayer

Lord Jesus,
 as you walked on the road to Emmaus,
 walk with us on the roads we travel.
 Help us to know your presence with us,
 and to be your presence to others.
 And, at the end of the day,
 may we all enjoy your feast.
 Amen.

Live your faith

Look for the chance to spend time with someone you don't know so well, and pray for an opportunity to share a story of what Jesus has done for you.