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“gathering the scattered” YouTube message

APRIL 26, 2020

Luke 24:13-35

We. Had. Hoped.

Feel the sadness?

I bet you’re saying that about a lot right now.

A month ago I never expected we’d all still be in lock down or so many deaths caused by this virus.

We all had hoped

(Like slowly opening up our social gatherings, right?)

Take heart. God is here. This will pass.

God will keep us safe in his way.

Hope expects & anticipates in a very bold, trusting way that a good thing will eventually happen. Based on having previous promises fulfilled.

5 years ago I asked for a new small snow blower for a Christmas present from members of my extended family.

It was easy to find.

On sale.

Not too expensive.

I hoped.

It didn’t happen.

Now I’m going to a new place with a much longer driveway & I WILL need it!

But..

I had hoped....

That’s not EXACTLY the same as the 2 Emmaus travellers.

They’re in a mix of grief & shattered dreams.

Such hopelessness can blind you from truth.

Think of Fake news — don’t know what or whom to believe

Like the so called Hoax virus 

Part of this is information in our cultural climate is hard to sift through for the truth.

But no matter what, life is filled with changes & transitions. Stages of life. School. Work. Family

Change is inevitable.

We grow or we die

And the

Christian life is all about coping with change.

In hope.

The two travellers are more than disappointed.

They grieve the loss of Jesus, who’d been taken and crucified.

Now, striding home, an unknown mystery man appears on their path joining in. Many people travel such roads. Especially after a major passover festival. Not to mention after witnessing a deadly weekend spectacle.

The travellers explain to this stranger joining them on the road that the body of Jesus is missing from his tomb—and how women coming back from the tomb have reported that Jesus is alive! He’s risen. But no where to be found...

. “We had hoped...,he was the Messiah...”

what’s that supposed to mean?

Messiah is a loaded word.

Like the word “interesting...” can introduce or describe so many things good & bad.

Messiah is the Lord’s Christ, the promised Redeemer, saviour of the nations who comes.

To many messiah is a political term of a divine power wiping out an evil human power.

Like the romans occupying Israel.

Maybe it’s a desire for this messiah to be a magician. Making piles of food appear for thousands out of mere crumbs.

Whatever filled their heads, messiah doesn’t mean dying on a cross. That’s huge defeat.

They’re exhausted and numbed—maybe they feel lied to, manipulated, exploited, betrayed—even forgotten by God?

The travellers are Cleopas & his son. Which is Jesus’ uncle & cousin!

Relatives of this mystery man.

But grief and stress blinds.

They can’t yet see him for who he is .....

Now. Jesus does set them straight about the “things” they hoped.

"How unwise and slow of heart you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken!"

Don’t mistake it for anger. It’s wrapped in caring language & mercy meaning. Jesus cares. He speaks as only a “stranger” could. An outsider. Knowing the truth. Because Jesus’ mother & father & brothers & sisters & uncles & cousins are not blood family but all those who hear His Word & Keep it!

Didn't the Messiah have to suffer these things and enter into His glory?"

Jesus starts explaining.

Everything

Beginning with Moses, the 1st 5 books of the Bible, which speak of sadness & death & wandering & Passover & Red Sea safety & HOPE!

Chiming in with the prophets..

Jesus shows how the Messiah must die 1st and-then rise. This is his way of serving God & humanity. This is how he redeems Israel. This is how we’re all adopted into Gods family by faith & baptism.

Before they know it, they’ve walked seven miles to Emmaus.

Jesus is done.

Filled their empty lives with His Word & Spirit.

Quickened their slowness of heart.

Now they burn with holy fire.

Passion.

Renewed faith.

He stays. They want him there. In their homes. At their table.

By holding bread, giving thanks to God, and breaking it as if to share it with them, Jesus departs!

Vanishes from their sight.

Because He chooses to be with them in their bread even as He chooses to vanish & be with all who need him.

And then.....they recognize him!

The grief and anger is gone.

Joy Comes to life!

And wonder.

And sharing

They’re so excited they leave the meal and run all the way back to Jerusalem telling the others—and learn that in the meantime Jesus appears to the others, too.

I love this story.

It’s one of my favourites.

Because you & I know what it is to be overwhelmed, confused, angry, isolated, afraid—flooded with so many emotions. We know that the deep, dark, frenzied flood takes its toll on us. It paralyzes us in unbelief. It robs us of truth. Casts shadows over our perspective.

In our frustration, grief, and anger, we often shut out God and his Word; we believe what we want to believe—that God doesn't care and neither do his people. But God still walks with you.

Do you have trouble hoping? I do too.

Hope is never wasted. We are a people of hope. It never disappoints. Rest assured, as sure as Christ Jesus is true & trustworthy Hope lives on.

He is present in your turmoil. Sitting with you in your doubts. Standing with you in your positions.

Taking up residence inside you, filling you, soothing you, ensuring you remain connected to His fathers kingdom. This is your hope.

God has loved you from the start. Making Jesus the one we hope for.

The one who is our hope.

Beginning with simple things, water, His Word, God makes you His own dear child. His son Jesus takes the abuse meant for you. Jesus perfectly lived for you. Jesus made Himself the way for you to entree His fathers kingdom. When we crave earthly change, we trust in spiritual transformation. For we have the cure, the remedy for despair.

Faith.

Building up into trust.

Peace.

Hope.

And joy.

Jesus is the one who died for you. Jesus is The one forsaken on the cross. You'll never be left alone or desolate. Christ is always with you. And he rested in the tomb, making death an entry into life & gives you a future full of life.

Jesus opens your eyes.

Jesus fills your heart.

You recognize him in the broken bread.

The Holy Communion, Eucharist, supper of our messiah. For Gods Word & presence make it a holy meal.

Reframing you're life with Jesus in the centre of your being.

And soon.....you begin recognizing that Jesus is there at your table, breaking bread with you and your loved ones.

What a blessing.

That in your daily bread of breakfast, lunch & dinner, Jesus is there.

Jesus is in your words, expressions, dreams, actions...and hopes.

I know so many of us wish churches could reopen to sing, pray, listen & dine together on the bread of life.

I also know that while this seems distant Jesus is not.

He's here.

Washing us with peace.

Setting fire to our baptismal burning hearts

Hoping.

Coping.

Seeing changes as this isolating has been with opportunity

Seeing new ways of being the body of Christ

Now

In the home

You may not run to someone to share this new hope or calming peace or a new perspective you have.

But you can still share it

Live it

Coping

While hoping

While waiting.

Amen.

Lord Jesus Christ, at the Emmaus table, you broke bread, delighted to place your body in the bread of life we share around your holy communion table, we praise you that in the liturgy of life apart from the church buildings you still strengthen us while we gather around your daily bread, which you supply us through our life and means of living. As we are many scattered, gather us in by your word of hope and may our baptism into your death & life transform us and by our witness, heal all who crave life, helping us see an end to COVID 19, and always show your saving face in all we say and do. For you live & rule with God our father & the fiery spirit burning within, forever. Amen.