

April 26, 2020

Third Sunday of Easter

## Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus

St. Luke 24:13-27

- I. Requires Properly Placed Hope
- II. Requires Knowing God's Word
- III. And So, We Sang

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Dear Friends in Christ,

I'm thinking that a fair number of us are quite familiar with and often comforted by Psalm 139, a Psalm of David. I ask that you carefully listen to the first six verses of that Psalm.

*O Lord, you have searched me and known me! You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from afar. (Simply put, God knows what we think before we think it). You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high; I cannot attain it.*

Those are absolutely some of the most amazing words. Commentator H. C. Leupold wrote, "God has let the full force of His Omniscience play upon every thought and activity of the psalmist and therefore has always known him more intimately than he knows himself." (H. C. Leupold, "Exposition of the Psalms," Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Third Printing, 1974, p. 943). Well, since the Holy Spirit had David write this for the church, then what David wrote holds true for us: God knows us more intimately than we know ourselves. However, what's equally amazing is how quickly Psalm 139 can get lost in the shadows; this valley of the shadow of death; those **dark, bad moments**.

It's still the day of Resurrection. Here's our goal:

### **LET US EVER WALK WITH JESUS**

#### I. Requires Properly Placed Hopes. (13-21)

*That very day two of them were going to a village named Emmaus...and they were talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them... But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk? And they stood still looking sad... And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, a man who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped he was the one to redeem Israel. (Vss. 13-21).*

These two were disciples. They had walked with Jesus. They observed Him. They heard Him. Well, they sort or heard Him. Or, maybe, they didn't. Or...maybe...what Jesus said and did got lost in the **dark, bad moments!** In a great way, they represent the road the church has mostly traveled over the centuries. "...we had hoped he was the one to redeem Israel." That is, "We had hoped he was the one who would set up a worldly kingdom and make this earth a bright and wonderful place!"

Either they missed it, or didn't want hear it - Jesus words: "*In the world you will have tribulation.*" (Jn. 16:33). And His words, "*And because lawlessness will be increased the love of many will grow cold. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations (A testimony! The world will mostly reject Jesus!), and then the end will come.*" (Matt. 24:12-14). And, of course, his words to Pilate, "*My kingdom is not of this world.*" (Jn. 18:36). I ask you, is there anything Jesus said that would lead us to believe that He

came into this world to make it, as it exists in its fallen state, a better place? On the contrary, He came to address why it is filled with generation after generation of **dark, bad moments**. Sin. Man deserves something from God, no doubt about it. But it isn't His love!

## II. Requires Knowing God's Word. (25-27)

We remember what God said to Adam: *"For in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."* (Gen. 2:17). Sin. We remember what the Apostle John wrote: *"sin is lawlessness."* The Apostle Paul gives the commentary: *"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man (Adam), and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned,"* (Rom 5:12). And then recall this that Paul wrote: *"The wages of sin is death."* (Rom. 6:23a). Flesh death followed by soul death, which isn't oblivion, but existing in torment without the love of God. And then, as children of God through faith in Christ, we recall the truth about ourselves - as God's children: *"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out."* (Rom. 7:18). **Not the ability**. This isn't excusing us. It isn't saying that our sin is "just one of those things." It's simply the truth!

We each confess: "I sin every day." And we hate it. Don't we hate the evil within? It always seems to be the same rotten thoughts. And those moments of reviewing things we've spoken can bring tears and cutting regrets. And then there's how all that translates into actions. And so, we each confess those familiar words: *"Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"* (Rom 7:24). Who is going to address the garbage and corruption of our sin and the death and hell we poor miserable sinners deserve?

And he said to them, *"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"* And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures all the things concerning himself. (vv. 25-27).

I would guess we're all very familiar with that time when John was baptizing and we're told, *"he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"* And I'm guessing we all know these words: *"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."* (Rom. 8:1). You see? It was "necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory." You see? *"The free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.."* (Rom. 6:23b). Free gift! It's poured out to us from the Cross. As John wrote, *"the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."* (1 Jn. 1:7b). The resurrection assures us of victory!

Listen. It's been stated many times: we're not going to have a little heaven on earth. If that's the case, if that's why any child of God is running himself or herself in circles with this world and making the most pathetic excuses for the lack of study and knowledge of God's Word, or sporadic worship, that child is locking himself or herself into a fragmented, nonsensical life!! Listen! We're told. *"And beginning with Moses and all the prophets (that's the Old Testament; the books the ignorant say are not that meaningful for the New Testament church) - beginning with Moses and all the prophets he interpreted in all the Scriptures all the things concerning himself."*

This Bible is our book. It's our business. It is the Word Himself reaching into our lives, revealing how He sees what we often twist or ignore; revealing love, comfort and hope in a world of decay and

death which no-one can or will avoid! This Book is our life source.

III. And So, We Sang. (Hymn 685; esp. v. 4).

And so, our sermon hymn, “Let Us Ever Walk With Jesus.” Note the opening words of each of the four stanzas: “Let us ever walk with Jesus... Let us suffer here with Jesus... Let us gladly die with Jesus... Let us also live with Jesus...”. God help us to carefully hear and consider what is presented in each stanza. It’s all rooted in Scripture. I would like for you to listen to these words from the second stanza:

Let us suffer here with Jesus, And with patience bear our cross. Joy will follow all our sadness; Where He is, there is no loss. Though today we sow no laughter, We shall reap celestial joy; All discomforts that annoy Shall give way to mirth hereafter. Jesus, here I share Your woe; Help me there Your joy to know.

Dear friends, I don’t care about and I’m not interested in anyone’s opinion about God, or heaven, or hell, or suffering, or death, or how we should live. If it doesn’t reflect Scripture’s teaching there’s nothing to consider. This is what holds us; this Word of God:

*See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. (1 Jn. 3:1-3).*

All the Scriptures we have heard this morning are incredibly familiar and repeated here with great consistency. But isn’t it amazing how quickly they can fade in the **dark, bad moments**? Well, for those moments when we might think God has forgotten us we hang on to these words from Psalm 139: “in your book were written every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.” (v. 16).

So, “Let us ever walk with Jesus.” Amen.

Pastor William K. Abbott