

Bristol Lutheran

Easter 2

Luke 24:13-35

4-23-2017

Easter is not over.

Not after Sundown last Sunday.

Not a week later.

Not after Jesus' ascends to heaven.

Not even 50 days after the resurrection – when this  
Easter Season switches to Pentecost.

Even when we the light and joy of Easter, is overshadowed by sadness,  
dark, or an unexpected announcement.

We continue to live, move and have our existence in the hope of Easter.

This week – has been different from any other I have  
had at Bristol. Holy Week was bad for Jesus; long and  
exhausting for church leaders – but the emotion of this  
week – phone calls, emails, conversations – support,  
encouragement, excitement – with a side of uncertainty  
and sadness. It is a lot to handle.

My role as pastor is to be calm in the midst of anxiety, to comfort in the  
midst of sadness...but that is whole lot harder when the pastor is the reason  
for the emotions.

I sometimes have had words to say this week – other times my mind has been blank, as I have processed through our transition, and have tried to help you process it as well. In seminary there is no preparation for this, after relationships have been built and ministry shared together, to let a congregation know that you are moving.

I remember distinctly asking this question in seminary – one of our final classes as seniors. Bishops were invited in to answer our questions about call process, congregations, basically anything. I wrote on the note card “How do you leave a call?” – I thought it was great. The bishops laughed at it...encouraging us to focus on starting, rather than leaving. “Who asked this question?” I didn’t raise my hand.

Except - maybe the answer about our journeys and transitions is right here...in the story of Easter and resurrection.

This story that drives our lives – is the preparation we need for any unexpected changes. To be reminded the way this sermon begins...Easter is not over.

Easter stretches across the rest of our lives. Sure the women could not call back angels, the disciples on the road may never meet the stranger on the road to Emmaus...but that doesn’t matter.

Jesus' resurrection, changes the meaning of life. Easter experiences, resurrection experiences – are re-lived every day. The story goes on, Easter is reality.

Remember the 'idle tale' the women preached after the resurrection? Their story was not believed...so Jesus took matters into his own hands. He kept showing up. His appearances didn't stop. They don't stop now.

The Emmaus Road story – is a road map to experiencing Jesus.

Even if the story warns us that Jesus will show up in unfamiliar forms, when we least expect him....maybe even as a stranger on the road.

As regular people, pastors included, trying to figure out faith, belief, life in Christ – the simple road map in our story, is a gift from God. It doesn't make faith easy, but it does give us hope that God is indeed with us, guiding all our journeys, wherever those journey's take us.

1. The Lord is risen – our journey's start only because Christ is alive!
2. Jesus meets us on the road, accompanies us, walks with us.
3. Jesus teaches us, challenges us, reframes the stories for us when we are wrong.
4. Jesus stays with us, eats with us.
5. Jesus goes ahead of us to prepare the way, (the next story he meets up with the disciples in Jerusalem but beats Cleopas there.)

If this isn't the heart of the gospel – if this isn't good news, I am not sure what is.

The road map to faith experiences, is not found in our ability to believe. It is found in Christ. It is found in Christ's body, the church. It is found you and me, the people who come in and out of our lives, as we meet together as Christ's disciples, to share God's mission and ministry together.

The disciples were the gracious recipients of the presence of Christ. The road map was all about what God has done, is doing and, promise to do through the life death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus – were running away, trying to escape the pain of losing their friend, their teacher, their Messiah, their God, their everything. They are hesitant about the resurrection. And Jesus meets them, to comfort, to eat with them, and to remind them that Easter is not over. How can we not go and tell...?

The risen Lord meets us on the road, in ordinary places, and experiences of our lives, and in the places to which we try to retreat when life is too much for us. God's presence is always elusive, fleeting, dancing at the edge of our awareness an perception.

But God is there.

In our daily Easter moments....our hearts are strangely warmed by the warm stranger and we recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread. Whether our dinner tables, or here at communion. We feel, see, taste, smell, and hear Jesus. We experience the love of Christ in the resurrected life.

And that doesn't stop. Easter is not over.

We mourn and grieve the moments that bring us sadness – but we celebrate the hope and future that awaits.

We cherish the work that God has done – and look forward to the surprises that God has in store for us.

We walk the uncertain road to Emmaus – knowing this story is our road map that reminds us of God's enduring presence, and promise, and love – walking alongside us, and preparing the way.

Easter is never over.

Resurrection isn't the end of the story. The journey awaits.

It is just the beginning.