

GRACE, MERCY, AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR HEAVENLY FATHER AND FROM OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.

The text is Luke the twenty-fourth chapter beginning at the twenty-fifth verse

“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 the things concerning himself.”

Christ is risen!

A lot happened on that first Easter Sunday. The resurrection, all the sightings of Jesus during the day, and that evening coming to them as they gathered together that evening when He ate the piece of fish, and of course, what we read in today's Gospel lesson.

These are all stories that we are more or less familiar with. We have heard them before in sermons and Bible class. Have we ever put them together as one consistent story. It would be a good exercise for us, but that's not what we are going to take a look at today. Because there is a single, consistent story that's even bigger than that first Easter except that at the same time it is all about that first Easter. Those three days that upended everything humanity thought it knew about God.

It's the over arching story of Scripture—the Bible story. Oh, there are plenty of subplots—Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the Exodus, the Babylonian Captivity, and more until we get to the birth of Jesus. It is in these stories, in fact all of the Old Testament, that we see that the one unifying purpose is to take us to the Cross.

We could work up a list of some of the scripture references Jesus might have used on the walk to Emmaus. That would be an interesting project, but it almost misses the point. You see the scribes, and the Pharisees, and the chief priests they already knew all that. If one of them were along on the walk to Emmaus they probably could've checked everything off on their list of memory verses. But knowing the facts about the coming Messiah didn't really do them much good did it. Because what they missed was that Jesus came to save sinners.

No, they were expecting a Messiah to come and reward them for doing what they've already done. You know, refine the rules—make them harder to keep. After all they were the professional rule keepers. They wouldn't want any tax collectors or other sinners getting rewarded. And it was all about the rules, about God's Law, wasn't it.

Oh the Law has its place, that's for sure. But from the moment God shed the blood of an animal to cover the nakedness of the man and the woman, God's purpose had been focused on the cross. It has been about crushing Satan's head and putting an end to death so that we can live.

Do you remember the Exodus? The Law has been the dark cloud that shrivels up our old nature. But it also lights our path through the sea of baptism into—

Oh, the wilderness.

The wilderness where we would starve, except for the bread from heaven. Where we would die of thirst, except for the Rock that was struck that we might live. The wilderness that we will get through and finally enter into rest—into the rest Jesus prepared for us.

Can you see Jesus here, in this story? We are intended to. This is what Jesus was explaining on the road to Emmaus and so much more. Stories the disciples had heard all their lives, stories the Pharisees could recite backwards, weren't just stories anymore, The prophecies were true. And the things that didn't make sense we're beginning to. The Messiah was a king who would reign forever, wasn't he? why would he die? And how could He still live? And what does it mean for me? And...

Does it take your breath away?

Those disciples rushed back to Jerusalem from Emmaus, I can almost hear them say, ***“Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?”*** They knew so much more now, The long awaited promise had been fulfilled. It was the end of a long wait.

It was just the beginning.

The revelation of Christ in scripture did not end on that Sunday evening with the breaking of bread in Emmaus, no all of scripture takes to us to the cross. Paul wrote ***“For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles”*** Much of the book of Hebrews is to explain some of the ways Jesus is the fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament.

In 1 Corinthians 13 where Paul points us to where the Law was pointing us all along, he writes ***“Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.”*** And until that moment comes when we can say along with Job

***For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and at the last he will stand upon the earth.
And after my skin has been thus destroyed,
yet in my flesh I shall see God,
whom I shall see for myself,
and my eyes shall behold, and not another.***

We remain the Children of God, and what children do. We learn. Sometime through good instruction, sometimes we learn things the hard way. So as ***dearly loved children*** let us learn and relearn this marvelous story we have heard. It is real history. It is sound advice for living. It is these things and more, but it is most of all the path to the cross, to the grave, to the skies, first for our Lord and Savior and then for us.

Christ is risen!

Amen

NOW MAY THE PEACE OF GOD WHICH PASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING,
KEEP YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS IN TO
LIFE EVERLASTING.