

Can I Be Sad?

Scripture: Luke 24: 15-35

Date: April 19, 2020

INTRODUCTION

Last week the global church celebrated Easter Sunday. Easter proclaiming the end of Lent, the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins and the triumphant resurrection from the grave. We shout and sing – Victory in Jesus. But we also recognize and remember that we are still in Covid 19 lockdown. We're still called into social isolation and social distancing. Even the Alberta weather has been – until now – cold and white.

It's hard to celebrate when life is heavy – when life is hard. Through the disappointments and the discouragement of walking through every day life.

SADNESS

TEXT

Two of Jesus's outer circle of disciples are returning home to Emmaus as the Feast of Passover has concluded. The week began with such pomp and celebration as Jesus entered into Jerusalem on a donkey and many had glorious visions of redemption and restoration for Israel. The week ended with His death - on a cross. Ordered by Pilate yet led by our religious leaders.

So the walk home is arduous. It's long and tiring and they are exhausted. Their dreams are dashed, their hopes are crushed and their future is downcast.

LIFE IN 2020

We too are walking a hard path in life right now. A world that has changed drastically with the impact of Covid 19. While life might have been hard to balance before – now it seems like it's racing downhill. People we know have had their jobs reduced or removed. People we know have had birthday parties muted through windows or Zoom. Funerals and weddings have been delayed or dismissed. Spring and summer once seasons of hope and encouragement now seem like a season of far off and far away.

Grocery stores have longer lines outside – than inside. Products like yeast or toilet paper are invisible in the stores and many other things are limited quantities only. Meanwhile online shopping is the norm and yet many remain fearful of anything and anyone delivering potential virus to their doors.

Our world is filled with losses, is filled with hurts and is filled with emptiness as people around the world are trying to find comfort & encouragement, trying to find meaning and purpose. Yet they can't.

STRUGGLES

TEXT

The walk and discussion by the two disciples is interrupted by a stranger and he asks the basis of their conversation.

Their reply borders on the incredulous. Are you the ONLY one in Jerusalem that DOESN'T know ?? How do you NOT know? This Jesus of Nazareth was clearly a prophet that was powerful in word and deed and seemed to be the best hope and redeemer for Israel. Yet now – now he's killed – dead – gone. Just like the hopes of the disciples.

Even stranger is that the body has disappeared but angels have appeared telling a very unexpected message that Jesus is alive ?!? What does that even mean? No one knows anything and the reports from the women don't make any sense.

LIFE IN 2020

In the midst of our Covid world what we once knew – no longer applies. There have been so many changes and adjustments that we've almost lost track of them. All we know is the emptiness of what we once had, the hopelessness of what we once wanted, the weight and burden of trying to move forward.

This sadness is compounded by the struggle of trying to make sense out of it. Who is responsible? How did we get here and how do we get out? Why is this happening?

These are all questions that haunt our dreams at night and hinder our lives at day.

SAVIOUR

COMFORT

Jesus – the stranger – enters the world of these two disciples. In the midst of their pain and anguish – their journey – Jesus enters. The Word made flesh enters the world of darkness – again. And again the world does not recognize Him.

Yet he continues to walk alongside them. He walks – relationally – with them. He enters a dialogue beginning with questions. Questions about where they are at – Jesus doesn't force the issue but invites the issue. The presence of God continues to be in our world – our space. The presence of God does not abandon us but seeks us out – to give us comfort in a world in which we have lost our way.

In Matthew 11: 28-30 – Jesus offers this comfort with these words:

²⁸ *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.*

²⁹ *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* - NIV

HOPE

But Jesus isn't just a presence with them as He is walking alongside of them. He also becomes a presence for them. One that later they will see empowers and encourages them. During this journey Jesus talks with them - engaging them, challenging them and teaching them. Jesus describes what happened and why and answers the questions of their struggle and sadness.

Jesus connects with them – and remains with them throughout their walk to Emmaus. At the village – at the end of the physical journey – Jesus appears to be continuing on. YET – still stays with them as He accepts their invitation for hospitality.

They still don't recognize Him – yet - but they are drawn by His presence and they offer Him the hospitality of their house. Perhaps they also offer him a hope that they are hungry – not just for a meal but for a moment that will change them permanently

SURPRISED**REVEALED**

And that hope is fulfilled. Jesus is revealed through the scriptures – as the Holy One – even as he's not recognized. Jesus is revealed in the sacrament – as the host. At that moment - in the moment of grace – Jesus is seen. In that moment – the moment of glory – Jesus is recognized. The disciples now see and know that Jesus is alive. The disciples now see and understand that Jesus is alive

REJOICING

In that awareness – their awareness grows. They recognized themselves as well as Jesus. They understood that their hearts were calmed with peace in the walk and their hearts burning with excitement in the talk. They were also rejoicing in their actions as well they ran the seven miles BACK to Jerusalem - despite it being evening / night. No longer content to walk they were filled with excitement they return to Jerusalem to share the good news with the others.

APPLICATION / CONCLUSION**EASTER TIDE**

So the initial questions is - Can I be sad? The answer is - yes as sadness is a normal reaction of life to loss. But at the same time can I be glad and the answer is also – yes. Because this is the Easter reaction to resurrection of life.

Easter is more than a day of the year. It is more than a moment – but a momentum through the days. Like an ocean tide – moving back and forth – with strength & power. Some days its less and some days its more BUT its never – never there.

Easter's power continues to comfort and give hope – even as we live in the broken and hurting world around us and await for the one yet to come.

AMEN