

Jesus, In the Breaking

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Easter 3

Later that same day, two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. ¹⁶ They were prevented from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He said to them, “What are you talking about as you walk along?” They stopped, their faces downcast.

¹⁸ The one named Cleopas replied, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have taken place there over the last few days?”

¹⁹ He said to them, “What things?”

They said to him, “The things about Jesus of Nazareth. Because of his powerful deeds and words, he was recognized by God and all the people as a prophet. ²⁰ But our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ We had hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel. All these things happened three days ago. ²² But there’s more: Some women from our group have left us stunned. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ and didn’t find his body. They came to us saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who told them he is alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women said. They didn’t see him.”

²⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing all that the prophets talked about. ²⁶ Wasn’t it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” ²⁷ Then he interpreted for them the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets.

²⁸ When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead. ²⁹ But they urged him, saying, “Stay with us. It’s nearly evening, and the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. ³² They said to each other,

“Weren’t our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?”

33 They got up right then and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34 They were saying to each other, “The Lord really has risen! He appeared to Simon!” 35 Then the two disciples described what had happened along the road and how Jesus was made known to them as he broke the bread.

I grew up with this painting of the Emmaus story in my house.
Robert Zund is Swiss
and the landscape doesn't look anything like
Palestine.

Still, I meditated on this photo,
What is Jesus saying? What would he say to me?

We were in line at the garden center,
to buy straw to put over our grass seedlings

After we finished our order and headed out to
the car,
Rose told me that a man
had looked at her, he was angry, accusing,
Surely not, I thought,
Was he wearing a mask, I asked,
thinking she might have
misinterpreted the eyes,

No

Well, Maybe was looking at someone else, she said.

We got in the car and pulled around to the pick up the straw
I spoke with the attendant
and then she said,
He just did it again,
the same man had just walked by the car,
and glared at her with hatred
just to make sure this young woman
of Asian descent got it,
all that vitriol, all that anger,

all that blame that's being
directed at them in this crisis.

She was wounded, I was incensed,
This stranger had taken a beautiful moment
of respite from house confinement
and interjected the sin of the world.

I turned the car around the parking lot to look for him,
Is that him, No. Is that him, No.
He's gone, she said.

We had no chance to bring him to call him to account.
I said, *Let's think about what we would have said to him*,
She was quiet,
I would say, *What are you looking at?*
What's wrong with you, you idiot?
You are ignorant...

Rose added quietly. *and racist*

We headed home, heavy hearted.
An hour later, she was still trying to get that face
out of her mind.

Rose is Vietnamese, but the Korean culture has a word for
hurt that knows no resolutions
laden with hopelessness, helplessness, bitterness, frustration
The word is "han"

The disciples walking home to Emmaus know *han*.
when a stranger asks them what they are discussing.
They stop, and look at him,
startled that he does not know

We were speaking of Jesus,
he was recognized by God and all the people as a prophet.
²⁰ But **our** chief priests and **our** leaders
handed him over to be sentenced to death,
and **they** crucified him. ²

And we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel"

Remember when your values have been betrayed
by those you trusted,
consider how excruciating the pain,
the bitterness,
the hopelessness, the helplessness.

Then the stranger,
one who endured not only the cross
but a lifetime of human struggles speaks to them, to us
He will not let the disciples just stay in their pain
they must comprehend it
Do you not understand what has happened?

Then he takes them through the
the teaching of Moses and all the prophets.
the lessons of all holy words and stories
that had been written
that they might see the fundamental pattern
of oppression and struggle
death and resurrection.

While we celebrate the helpers
those on the frontlines
those engaging of selfless, generous acts,
There is also the hoarding of supplies
a rise in death by gunfire
and the blaming of innocents.
We must take in all of us, understand all of it,
challenge the wrong,
and move together toward restoration,

When the travelers reached a crossroad
Jesus seemed ready to go on his own way,
but they invite him home.
where, scripture says,
he takes his place at their table,
and then takes the bread.

And finally they see him, in the breaking

Jesus, who knows human sufferings,
knows our pain,
is made known to us in the breaking
of hopes and dreams.

says *Look for the patterns,*
oppression, death, resurrection.
just as there is life beyond my crucifixion,
there is life beyond your brokenness.
Don't stay in pain, in sorrow, in anger,
something else is required of you...

Then he waits, at the crossroads
waits for us to invite him home.
I don't know about you,
but if Jesus was coming to my house to stay
I'd like a little warning, so I could clear some things out.

that of me that gets in the way of the divine presence
the unseen guest
that wounded God in Christ
the powerful, wise, saving one
who waits within.

As we were driving home,
and I'd said all the things I would have said
to put Rose's accuser in his place

Rose spoke up: I would say,
Imagine if someone did this to you,
or to your daughter, how would you feel?

She was ready to help him toward healing
by inviting him to another perspective
to love his neighbor as he loves himself

We all continue to walk the Emmaus Road

and Jesus will continue to meet us
in the breaking of our hearts
in the breaking of the bread
and make us whole.

Questions for Reflection

1. The disciples on the Emmaus road were struggling to believe the story the women told of the empty tomb. Jesus then illuminates the pattern of death and resurrection that flows through the scriptures.

Do you see that pattern in what is unfolding around us now? Describe it.

2. Jesus accepts an invitation into the home of the travelers.

What might it mean to invite Jesus into our home?

3. There are widely varying responses to the COVID19 outbreak, and anger flares when the response from one group is viewed as irresponsible by another.

What would Jesus do? How might he be calling us to comprehend others in this situation?

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