

vision of angels, who said he was alive. ²⁴ Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”

It's always amazing to me to remember that this
was unfolding for the disciples in real time.
They didn't know what would happen next.
They didn't have the “rest of the story” as we know it.

For them, everything was happening for the first time.
Everything was new and surprising.

I love that Jesus asks them to tell him what has been happening.
It seems like just part of a conversation,
but it's actually quite brilliant what Jesus is doing here.

Of course he knows exactly what they are talking about
when they say they have been discussing
the things that have happened in Jerusalem.

He's well aware that they have been talking about him, and about his crucifixion.
So why does he ask, “what things?”

I suspect - I am convinced - that Jesus is doing a “teachable moment” thing, here.
He is getting them to tell their story.
He is getting them to begin thinking about their testimony.

He doesn't call attention to it that way,
he just naturally asks the question which begs an answer
which becomes a testimony.

Testimony isn't necessarily our strength, as Presbyterians.
There are other cultures and other denominations where testimony
is just so normal and natural.
It might be part of every service,
or it might be a special Sunday
that is testimony Sunday each month.

I once attended an evangelical Anglican church,
and there was a part of their service called “Testimony.”
And anyone who wanted to could stand up
and share with the congregation what God was doing in their lives.

Let me tell you - it is incredibly powerful when an average person in the pew,
begins to talk to the congregation about how God is moving in their lives.

Now, I'll be honest - I think it would drive me batty to have that every week,
because we are, after all, presbyterian and we like our service kept to an hour or so,
and I know I would struggle with someone who went on to long,
or was repeating themselves, going in circles.

And - here's how you know I'm a type-A personality -
how would you control how many people wanted to speak,
or what if no one wanted to speak?

That said, there's this thing about telling our story,
telling how God has impacted us,
that is incredibly powerful.
Jesus is a walking defining moment,
and right now, he's teaching the disciples how to preach,
and they don't even realize it.

I am sure that they told this story over and over again throughout their lifetimes.
In fact, they had to have done so
because this is how faith spread in the early days of the church -
ordinary people sharing the extraordinary story of the good news
in Christ Jesus.

When I felt the call to ministry,
one of the first things I was encouraged to do
was to get good at telling the story of my call.
Partially because I would have to share it
with the Session and the Presbytery during interviews
to see if they would support my call.

Every candidate for ministry in the PCC has to do that.
But also, because knowing my story would help me through the tough times.

And it's true.
I've told the story of my call countless times
over the last 16 years as an ordained minister,
and countless times before that during my years at seminary.

And when I have had cause to think maybe this is just too hard,
maybe I'm not the best at this ministry thing,
maybe I'm wrong to be spending my life serving in this way,
I stop and I tell myself my story.

And I remember what it is to feel God at work in my life -
not just in the moments when I recognized my call,
but in the 5 years that he was shouting at me to go into the ministry
and I was stubbornly sticking my fingers in my ears
going "la-la-la-I-can't-hear-you!"

And then I begin to remember all the times -
all the countless moments -
God has shown up in my life since that moment of recognizing my call....

And I am strengthened.
And I am encouraged.
And I know.

I know it's not too hard.

I know whether or not I'm the best at it, God is using my ministry to His good purpose.
I know my life is purposeful and meaningful,
and I'm not wrong to spend it serving this way.

I think Jesus is well aware of how important this testimony will be to these men,
and to the people they share it with in the coming years.
And so he's getting them to tell their story.

And I think that's why the story continues in this way:

²⁵ He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

You see, he isn't about to leave it to just their story.

Their story is bolstered and shot-through with scriptural touch-points.

Their story is just a small snapshot of the long -
centuries-long -

story that God has been writing in the hearts of humanity.

It began with Adam and Eve who walked with God in the cool of the day in the garden,
and Jesus opens to them the Scriptures and all that has been written about him,
so that they can understand
how their story fits within the Big Story of God's love for his creation.

As he's teaching them, they continue to walk,
and Luke tells us:

²⁸ As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. ³² They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

I wonder what it was like.

They recognized him and then He disappeared from their sight.

And they turned to each other and said - weren't our hearts burning within us?

It's as if they have known all along that Jesus
was the one walking with them on the Emmaus Road,
but they just couldn't take a breath and put it all together,
until that moment when he breaks the bread.

And I'll tell you another thing - that's also like my call to the ministry.
When I look back over those 5 years before I accepted, before I understood,
that God was calling me,
I can say - wasn't my heart burning within me.
For 5 years!

I would have conversations and experiences and it was like I KNEW something was happening,
but I just couldn't put it all together until...well, until the appointed moment.
Which came, for me, on a treadmill in a GoodLife Fitness Centre, of all places.

The thing I love is that Jesus is with them, throughout this walk, and during this meal.
He is present and he is leading and he is teaching and he is revealing himself to them.

This entire resurrection encounter is Jesus saying by his actions -
I am with you, I am with you, I am with you.

There's a hymn I love - it's not one we are singing today - that has the lyrics,
"then we know that God still goes that road with us."

Jesus is going the road with the disciples.
He walks beside them, sits down at table with them, breaks bread with them.
He has patience for their lack of understanding.
He takes the time to teach them.
This is who the Risen Christ **IS**.

Companion.
Friend.
Teacher.
Saviour.

This is who we are meant to be to each other.
Patient, kind, bearing with one another in love, having one mind,
being one in spirit and purpose.

But also having room for those who are not at the same place in their journey.
Not dragging them into our place, but going the road beside them,
sharing the meal with them, giving them the time they need,
and the encouragement they need,
to put it all together.

This is what it means to be in it, together.

Let us pray.