

It's the 3rd Sunday in the season of Easter. I say the "season of Easter" because Easter is not limited to one day, it's a season of 50 days. The Easter season begins on Resurrection Sunday and concludes on Pentecost. The number, 50 days, is calculated from the book of Acts. According to the author of both the books Luke and Acts, Jesus was resurrected, and then spent 40 days appearing to disciples in all kinds of places. Then 40 days after the resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven, promising the gift of the HS would soon follow. 10 days later, the Holy Spirit appeared in a whole new way. This year Pentecost is June 4 - the day we wear red. Resurrection Sunday, 40 days to the Ascension, then another 10 to the Holy Spirit. God's movement is up and down, inward and outward, always present here and now.

After the resurrection, the disciples kept running into the Risen Christ— behind locked doors, on the road, at work. This wasn't the exact same Jesus. Suffering changes a person, even the person who is God. There were still those wounds, on his hands and in his side. This was the resurrected Christ – the Living God who kept showing up to do what he'd been doing for the whole time he lived on earth - teaching, explaining, listening, and giving. Giving forgiveness. Giving the Spirit. Giving shalom peace. No one knows how many of these resurrection visits took place. The gospel authors wrote down seven, which seems more like a representation of the ways God shows up and less of a comprehensive list. Each Sunday during the Easter season, we give attention to one resurrection story - hoping in part to learn to be aware, to be conscious of the Living God in our midst, every hour of every day.

Resurrection appearances are different from the way the gospels write about the crucifixion. In the crucifixion, the details are clear. Stark. Factual. Jesus was taken up a hill and put to death on a cross. He had a sign above his head, King of the Jews. Lots of people saw it happen. With the Risen Christ it's different. More mysterious, mystical. Last week we talked about Thomas who decided again to love the living God. Today our focus is on a story at the end of Luke's gospel. Today, no one recognizes the Living Christ until he breaks the bread.

Perhaps this is similar to the situation in today's scripture. A couple people who were in Jerusalem were walking on the road, the long road back to Emmaus. It's about 7 miles between Jerusalem and the town of Emmaus. It would take two, maybe three hours to walk. That's plenty of time to go over all the details of the last days. It's a familiar road. We've all been there. It's the long road we walk when we are disappointed, sad, and feel let down, lost. It's the road we walk when money is tight, we failed our class, our lies are discovered, our friend calls with the kind of bad news that requires us to sit down. Suffering is a miserable road. We have to figure out how to live with the suffering. I've been thinking about this as I've been reading Sheryl Sandberg's new book, Option B. When Option A is no longer available, you have to go with Option B and give it your best.

This was the situation of Cleopas and the others. They thought that Jesus would save them. Option A - Jesus the Savior, Lord, King, Messiah. Like Moses led the people from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Holy Land. Wasn't Jesus the one who would save them from Rome? Free them to live again in the Holy Land as God's people? Option A ended on a cross. Cleopas and the others were on the road home, and as a metaphor, they are on the road to figuring out what now. Jesus promised so much, but then he was gone. And now, rumors of resurrection? Nothing is adding up. How to make sense of this?

As they are talking all this over, a stranger joins them. He asks what they're talking about, and I imagine they look at the stranger as if he was Rip Van Winkle. "Where have you been for the last week? Are you the only person in Jerusalem who doesn't know what happened?" The stranger doesn't seem to have checked his phone to read his news alerts or opened email. So they start to explain it all to him, walking him through the events, step by step, as they head home.

Then, the strangest thing happens. The stranger bursts out, "Oh how foolish you are, and how slow of heart!" he says. Which is kind of like saying, "You fools!" Then, the stranger took them through the scriptures and helped them understand how to live in the world with the Risen Christ, the Living God. The Living God was explaining the world of the resurrection where agape love wins over domination and fear. The resurrection and God's love is Option B where death leads to life. Suffering leads to joy. Defeats aren't failures. Wounds create space for healing. Sorrow leads to a deeper consciousness of God's light.

When they get to Emmaus, the stranger makes motions to keep walking. But they insist, "No, come in, eat with us." And who knows. It might have been the angle he held bread. It might have been the tone of his voice. But when he said those words, "taken, blessed, broken, given," they know it's God. Living. Here. Now. Then that Risen Christ disappears. He isn't gone. He different. And once again, they believe. Like Thomas last week, Clops and the others decide to love the Living God, this new option. The joy, the possibility, the excitement, it starts to come back. But mostly it's the hope that begins to make them feel whole again.

Isn't this the same for us today? Even when we can't see or hear, the Risen Christ is with us. Perhaps, especially when we can't see or hear, Christ shows up. Here, today, and tomorrow and all week, Christ shows up to take and bless and break and give – bread, and hope, and peace that we can believe in - life that makes meaning from suffering, finds hope in despair, and is certain that even though weeping may linger for the night, joy really does come in the morning.

sources:

BBT sermon "Blessed Brokenness" from [Gospel Medicine](#), p. 19-23.

Option B by Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant