

Sermon: 19 April 2020 @ 9h30

Theme: The Risen Lord, Our guide and GPS

Good morning Brothers and sisters. My name is Stephen Groep, a student minister at the St. Paul's United church in Mulbarton.

Let us pray: Meet us, Lord, on the road to Emmaus,
Guide us on the path toward our destination,
and renew our strength as we continue to walk and commune with you.
Open our eyes, so we see the signs of your presence around us;
open our hearts, so we may receive your peace and love;
and empower us to pass on to others the grace you have shared with us so freely.
And as we walk with You daily, help us Lord to be light bearers and help us to experience what these two disciples experience, hearts that are burning because of Your presence. Help to show the same enthusiasm they showed when their eyes were opened when You broke the bread. And especially now amid the Corona virus and the lockdown, when many has lost hope, help us to reach out to them through prayer and social media. You brought us hope through Your death and resurrection. Thank you, Lord that You are omnipresent and that You promise in Your Word that You will never leave us nor forsake. Be with us now Lord, we ask this in the Precious Name of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Our scripture reading this morning comes from: Luke 24: 13 – 35:

On the Road to Emmaus

¹³ Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles^[a] from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. ¹⁵ As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; ¹⁶ but they were kept from recognizing him.

¹⁷ He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?”

They stood still; their faces downcast. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?”

¹⁹ “What things?” he asked.

“About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. ²⁰ The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; ²¹ but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. ²² In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning ²³ but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a 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 they did not see Jesus.”

²⁵ He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Did not the Messiah 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.

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?”

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen

and has appeared to Simon.”³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

This is the word of the Lord.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your Word, thank you that when we read in Your Word You speak to us, we pray know reveal Your Word unto us and I pray that the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable to You our God and our Creator. Amen

On this the Sunday after Easter Sunday we reflect on the journey motif as Jesus and the two disciples have an unexpected encounter. The two were on their way home to Emmaus, downcast, in fear and disillusionment, hopeless and discouraged about the events that had happened to Jesus. It must have been so dreadful to witness the crucifixion of Jesus. Our life is a journey We always on the road in our life’s journey and often find ourselves in places of fear, hopelessness being discouraged and downcast. We are currently at a place on our journey where we are faced with this Corona virus or Covid -19. And this the news of so many being affected, so many across the world that has already succumbed to the virus, creates fear in us, fear of what the future holds. The situation looks hopeless and maybe we can associate with these two disciples, how they are feeling after what they have witnessed. There hope was in Jesus, verse 21: “²¹ ***but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.***”

All their hopes shattered on the cross. They have lost their GPS, their Global Positioning System. Have we lost our GPS amid this the Corona virus? Have we lost hope, do we feel discouraged? **In Psalm 119: 105 David declares: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”**, in other words a light on my journey. Do we still believe this, especially now that we are faced with this lockdown due the pandemic?

There is hope, at the end of this story these two disciples are witnesses to what happened to the Risen Lord, our GPS and guide on this, our journey.

The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures are filled with journeys. The Prodigal Son leaves his father's house and finds himself in an unfamiliar, foreign and strange place. When he finds himself eating with the pigs, he decides to return to his father's house. Here, his father restores him to his former glory. Are we finding ourselves eating with the pigs amid this pandemic? We can return to our Risen Lord, our GPS and guide even with what we are facing now, and He will restore us to our former glory. Have we noticed Jesus on our road, or have we lost sight of Him? Are we blinded by our circumstances, are we blinded by the amount of affected and the amount of deaths due to this virus; can we still see Jesus on our road? Can we still feel our hearts burning while He continues to be amongst us or has all the worries of this world put out that flame? Know this: God is still in control!

This is just but another roadblock on our road and this also will pass. We are encouraged in Joshua 1:9 – **“Be confident. For go where you will, your God is with you.”** What a blessed assurance?

It's easy to understand these two disciples they have lost hope because they thought Jesus was dead. Maybe we have lost hope because of what we are facing, being diagnosed with cancer, HIV/AIDS, Covid 19 and the list just goes on.

Maybe because of this we find excuses for our own tiredness in living the life of faith every day and for our giving up on following Jesus.

There is hope, we don't have to give up. Verse 30 – 35: 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?”*

³³ They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together ³⁴ and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." ³⁵ Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread."

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! And in this we can find hope in whatever we are facing today. God still Loves us and just want the best for us. So, let us trust Him with our lives and our life's journey. Let us allow Him to guide us on this unknown road we are on. God is still in control.

Prayer: Give me, Lord, a companion on my journey who will share the disillusionment and tiredness that my life as your disciple has produced in me. Your cross continues to bury my weak faith. Give me, Lord, someone I can trust as I walk towards Emmaus. Come yourself and walk with me as I go along my life's journey. And as we face this pandemic Lord, I pray that You will bring healing in our country and in the world. I know Lord that you are still in control and that You will never leave us nor forsake us. I pray this in Jesus Name. Amen