

Christ is Risen! (*He is risen, indeed! Alleluia!*)

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit

They had all the facts:

they had the suffering, death, and burial,
the empty tomb,
the witness of the women and the vision of the angels,
and besides all this, it is now the third day.

They had everything right in front of them, and yet their heads hung low.

“We had hoped He was the One to redeem Israel.” (Lk 24:21)

Everything was before them, *but their eyes were kept from recognizing Him.*

Why?

Why didn't they know?

Why the sadness and the disappointment?

Where was their Easter joy?

What were they expecting?

What did they think God was like?

Whatever it was, they expected a different sort of God.

When they looked at the cross they were ashamed.

They wanted more, and better, and bigger, and greater.

They wanted strength, not weakness;

glory, not humiliation,

life, not death.

When they thought of Jesus,

they thought of Him apart from God—

almost as a failed experiment, or a good try; but not God.

God can't be like *that*.

So their heads hung low.

They had hoped He was the One.

We can relate here.

Have you been disappointed with God?

Has He let you down?

Has He failed to be the God you thought He should be?

These two disciples walking toward Emmaus had hoped Jesus was the One.

But with the cross, their hopes were gone.

And then came Jesus.

You can only imagine what they were talking about.

It was probably a bunch of “what-ifs”.

What if we had just spoken up?

What if we could’ve raised more funds to buy out the crowd?

What if Jesus told Pilate how it really is?

What if Pilate listened to his wife?

What if we stepped in, all together, and rescued Him?

The list is endless.

So it goes with death.

What if I had just said or done it differently?

Luke tells us,

“While they were talking and discussing together,

Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.

But their eyes were kept from recognizing Him.” (Lk 24:15-16)

He asked what they’re talking about;

and they looked at Him as if you couldn’t ask a dumber question.

They then run through the list of injustices and atrocities of these last days.

They run through the facts—even of the resurrection—but it all ends in sadness;

for this Jesus couldn’t have been God—not like that.

So Jesus says to them,

“O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?”

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the

Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” (24:25-27)

Probably one of the best Bible studies of all time!

Every book, every page, every verse and story and Psalm and Proverb—

it’s all Christ and Him crucified.

And best of all, through these texts and stories they were to see that it was *necessary* that the Christ should suffer.

Necessary.

It wasn’t necessary as if God was forced to do anything from the outside.

The devil didn’t hold God captive.

We didn’t convince Him to come.

Nothing holds God to this or anything else—

except, of course, God Himself.

This is *who God is!*

God is the crucified Jesus.
He was that for Abraham and Joseph and David and Ezekiel.

It's *necessary* for the Christ to suffer because that's who God is, the One who redeems Israel—
not with gold or silver, but by His own precious blood.

They still didn't see Him as He was yet, but their hearts burned within them.
They wanted more.

“So as they drew near to the village to which they were going, He acted as if He were going farther, but they urged Him strongly, saying, ‘Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.’ So He went with them.” (24:28-29)

They didn't recognize Him to be the Lord, but when they were with Him things were different.
They had hope, again.
There was a strange comfort—even in the midst of sadness and despair.
When they looked at this stranger, there was something beautiful, peaceful, and true.

And it all came together as they sat at the feast.
*“When He was at table with them,
He took the bread and blessed it and broke it and gave it to them.” (24:30)*

At that moment, *their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him.
And He vanished from their sight. (24:31)*

This is the Lord's Supper.
Jesus takes place as host, even though He's the guest of these disciples.
He takes the bread and blesses it and breaks it and gives it to them.
And there everything comes together.

And so it is for us.

These two disciples were not sad when He vanished from their sight.
There's no return to the heads hung low and their hope hasn't gone away.
No, instead, they now see God as He really is in the breaking of the bread.

No longer do they look at the cross as defeat,
or the bread and the wine as if they're somehow apart from Christ Himself.

There's no separation: they see Him in this meal.
And so do you.

If the meal is something *in addition* to Christ—you've got the wrong meal.
If baptism, like in our reading from Acts, is something *in addition* to Christ—you've got the wrong baptism.

If the preaching of the Gospel, the opening up of the Scriptures aren't the story that tells of the necessity of Christ suffering and dying and on the third day rising—then you've got the wrong Scriptures.

And in all of it, it's not the meal or the baptism or the preaching or the Scriptures that are wrong,
it's likely that your eyes are kept from recognizing Him—
and that because you're looking for a different God.

But our God is the One who takes us into Himself.
He enters our suffering, our hopelessness, our pain—even our sin—
He takes us into Himself.

And He does it now for you at this meal.
He removes the covering of sin from your eyes,
and He reveals Himself to you in the breaking of the bread.

By this Bread, He draws you into Himself.
And in this way, you're just like those two disciples walking along the Emmaus road:
your hopelessness is turned to pure joy,
and you run to tell what happened on the road,
that this God is known in the breaking of the bread.

For you, and for the world.

Christ is risen! (*He's risen indeed, alleluia!*)

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit