

***Alleluia! Christ is Risen!***

***Grace, mercy, and peace from the one who was dead, but now lives.***

***How's your vision?***

***When you look out on the world does what you see come clearly into focus? Or would you rather not even look?***

***Is the good that God has done blurred or obscured by the hopeless evil with which humanity has saddled on the world?***

Is your heart weighed down with the senseless slaughter of innocent people in Syria, or the frighteningly dangerous sabre rattling in North Korea?

Does concern for the earth and greed that causes political leaders to ignore climate change make you see red? Are you afraid of the world we're leaving behind for our children and grandchildren? Does your stomach turn when you think about what the world will look like when you become an adult?

Does the apparent death of the American dream cause you to look toward the future with profound sadness?

Does the widespread exploitation of women and children in the international sex trade blur your vision with tear of rage?

Do those words we said – *“Alleluia, Christ is Risen! He is Risen indeed. Alleluia!”* – even register when you look out on the brutality, the indifference, the wholesale destruction we've brought upon our world? Does it sound like an empty echo in a vast chamber?

***If any of this is true for you – as it is for me, we my brothers or***

*sisters find ourselves walking down that same road to Emmaus with Cleopas and his wife; “what’s her name?”*

Those two walking back home in despair have heard the reports of the women about the empty tomb. They heard the angel’s words to them, but their eyes were kept from seeing Christ Risen from the dead. They hear the stranger walking the road with them opening the scripture to them, and still don’t see Him right next to them. He walks beside them for hours, but they just don’t see the Risen Christ.

*I mean, honestly, can you blame them?* And I don’t just mean Cleopas and *What’s her name*. I mean everyone who just can’t see it – your neighbor, the teacher who tells you your stupid if you believe, the young people who have and their parents who have abandoned the church in droves. Can you blame them?

**As I reflected I realized that the only difference between them and me was that moment when the light and hope of trusting God put to flight everything my sad weary eyes witnessed all around me.**

I can hardly express to you how important understanding this is? It’s the difference between resentment and sharing the good news. It’s the difference between just going to church and believing something to get into heaven and living with enduring hope and joy.

The people who aren’t in these pews this morning, they aren’t wrong and they aren’t persecuting the church. They just can’t see the risen Christ yet. They -- all of them – are why our eyes have been opened. *Our eyes have been opened so that theirs can be opened –*

so that we can tell them the story so that it addresses the sadness of their lives.

**But here's the thing.** The story alone is not enough. It wasn't enough for those two walking to Emmaus – Jesus told them everything as it relates to scripture and they didn't see Him risen before their very eyes. The walking and talking aren't enough. They're crucial, but they're not enough. They don't see the Risen Christ until they break bread together. In first century Palestine – in fact in most times and places – sharing a meal with someone turns them from a stranger to a friend.

*That's what happens in our gospel. Cleopas and unnamed partner make an invitation of friendship to the person telling walking with them,* and suddenly in the breaking of the bread they recognize Jesus, risen and victorious. **That's why we come here every Sunday to listen to the story of how God has been trying for eons to let us know there is hope beyond what we see. *To share a meal of friendship even hope with others who wish to see the world with God's vision.*** When we do this we meet Jesus – perhaps only for an instant, but it's enough to renew our trust in the Risen one. *Without this – the sights of this world reduce us to trudging along to hide in our houses.*

In this gathering of God's Word and the meal we see the Risen Christ and like those two on the road to Emmaus have an amazing hope to share with others. Jesus shared the good news so that people would come to know that God hasn't forgotten about all of us

who are “*foolish and slow of heart to believe.*” And now in Christ, through Holy Baptism, we have that same urgent hope to share with a world full of people who haven’t yet met the Risen One.

*If you care about someone, you don’t want them to walk through life sadly viewing the mess we are and we’ve made.*

*Jesus didn’t want that for His friends, and so he walked with them along the road to Emmaus and shared a meal with them until they recognized Him in their presence. I can’t imagine that He would have us do anything less than proclaim:*

***Alleluia! Christ is Risen.***

***Amen!!!***