



MORRISON ZION EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

www.mzluth.org

May 4, 2014

Mr. Rick Muchka

3rd Sunday of Easter

First Lesson: [Acts 24:10-21](#)

Psalm of the Day: [Psalm 67](#)

Second Lesson: [1 Peter 1:17-21](#)

Gospel Lesson: [Luke 24:13-35](#)

Sermon Text: [Luke 24:13-35](#)

The Redeemer Lives! He Lives To Restore My Hope

In Christ, dear fellow redeemed:

Depending on how old you are or what generation you grew up in, when I ask you the question, how do you spell relief, you may immediately and instinctively think in your heads... R-O-L-A-I-D-S. A very successful ad campaign from the past used that as a catch phrase over and over again. They could run those ads so much because heartburn seems to be a national pastime in our country. I bet you could list more treatments for heartburn right now than you can list the apostles of Jesus. Or you've probably seen more animated stomach blockers neutralizing acid on TV commercials than you have seen pictures from maybe your own wedding. I understand it. Heartburn is not a fun thing. I've experienced it. I don't like it. So I understand why it's such a big business. Heartburn is usually something you want to get rid of. Except today when you consider the kind of heart burn that the Holy Spirit talks about through Luke this morning.

I find this to be one of the most fascinating and surprising sections of Jesus' resurrection accounts. These two disciples on the road to Emmaus are miserable. They are hopeless. They are beaten down and broken. I think that's what you can see when you read this part of the Bible. They see Jesus face to face and what is recorded for us is not... Can you believe it?! Jesus is alive! Or... Can you believe it?! We just saw Jesus! Their words that the Holy Spirit records for us are... "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

Isn't that amazing? Doesn't that just shake where you are and who you are and what you think about how you approach life? Humanly speaking, we would expect these guys to say... We just talked to Jesus, who was dead, and now is alive! But they didn't say that. They talked about the power of the same things that you and I can hold in our hands every single day of our lives. Think of how often you and I are envious of these guys that got to sit at Jesus' feet and see him face to face on a daily basis. So let's listen to them. They are telling us to find our hope from heart burn, this kind of heart burn that comes from being immersed in the Word of God. It brings hope.

When these guys didn't have hope, they were heart broken. Their hearts were aching and breaking and they were miserable. But when their hearts started burning with the Holy Spirit working through the Scriptures, they found a hope that sustained them, a hope that motivated them, a hope that moved them.

You can kind of sympathize with Cleopas and the other unnamed guy, can't you? Their heads just had to be swimming. Just think about what they had gone through in the past week. Palm Sunday - everything looks like maybe this is it. Jesus is going to establish his kingdom, the kingdom that they were expecting, this earthly kingdom of the Messiah. They had seen him teach in the temple during the week, in power, and the people just stood in awe with their jaws dropping at the power of his teaching. They had seen the miracles. They had seen what he had done. Maybe they had even been there when Lazarus was raised from the dead not all that long ago.

But now - an arrest. A crucifixion. And these new stories that they couldn't quite wrap their head around. The women went to the tomb, but he's not there. Something about angels and all these things. The stone is rolled away, but the body is not there. They don't know what is going on. It says as they were walking these seven miles to Emmaus, they were discussing things. Literally it talks about them bouncing things back and forth off of each other. It was like they would say... Well, what about this? And then they would talk about it a little bit and then they would come to a dead end, so then they would go in another direction. They were trying to digest everything, but they just couldn't digest it. They couldn't understand it. They couldn't comprehend it.

Then we get to one of the saddest verses in Scriptures. It comes when this clueless guy comes along and doesn't seem to know anything about anything. He starts asking them questions. What are you guys talking about? Their answer to him is... You fool. Anyone knows what we are talking about with everything that has been going on. And then they said, "We are talking about Jesus of Nazareth." Then here is where the sad statement comes in... "we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel." It sounds like as they discussed everything they just couldn't come up with an answer. It sounds like hope was gone. The time and energy they had put into following Jesus and learning about Jesus as they were looking at it now in face value appears to have been wasted time. "We had hoped he was the one that would redeem Israel." It sounds like that hope is gone.

You'd expect Jesus to say... Look guys! Here! It's me! But he doesn't. He kept them from recognizing him. Then he says something that probably surprises us a great deal. It might even sound kind of harsh. Doesn't Jesus sound a little harsh here when he says... You fools! How foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Foolish? Slow of heart? These guys are already beaten down. It says their faces were downcast. You've seen that, right? You walk to someone and they can't look you in the eye. Their heads are down. They can't even lift their eyes up because they are so beaten down and broken. These disciples are like this. They are hopeless. They are beaten down and broken. Faces downcast. Jesus calls them fools and slow of heart.

So what does it mean whenever God calls somebody a fool? He's saying you're a fool because you had better knowledge but you didn't act on it. You knew better, but you didn't really know better. It's kind of like when a little kid dares another little kid to lick a flagpole and it's -30°F in the middle of winter. Then they go ahead and do it. That's a fool, right? You should have known better. Mom and dad have to tell them it was kind of a foolish thing. You should have known better. You know what is going to happen if you do that. Your tongue is going to stick and it's going to be a problem. Jesus was saying, you should have known better. You had every opportunity to know better.

But they didn't know what Moses and the Prophets had said. Sure they knew Moses and the Prophets, but they knew them through the eyes of what they were used to thinking about and what they were used to seeing, not digging into it with eyes that searched and said, "God, open my heart so that I can learn great things from your Word." They were seeing with the eyes of the expectations of their day. That the Messiah would come and establish an earthly kingdom and get rid of the Romans and they'd go back to Solomon's day. They didn't see the pictures in the Psalms and in Isaiah about the suffering Messiah who would have to suffer and die and then rise again. They didn't see those passages because they chose to focus on what they liked better, the conquering Messiah. It's understandable, but it's foolish.

It's just as foolish when you and I want to operate by what we know, by what we see, by what we like, by what we are used to, by what we are comfortable with, as opposed to what the Word of God says. The Word of God is where the power is. The Word of God is where the hope is. If we just rely on... that's the way we've always done it... then we are one step removed from God's Word. Then we can't plug into that power source. We can't find that hope. We can't find that comfort because we're staying away from it. I think the Lord our God would tell us today just as certainly as he did that day that this is foolishness. Get into where the hope and the power is because that's exactly what happened to these guys.

It says, beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, Jesus explained to them why all this had to happen. And their response to all this, like we already mentioned, when Jesus disappears after he starts to distribute the evening meal isn't... Can you believe we just saw Jesus?! It's... weren't our hearts burning within us as he opened Scripture to us? You see the power that is the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit works through the means of grace, through the Word and the Sacraments.

He opens our eyes to see what we could never see. He gives us gifts that we could never get for ourselves. The more we are in the Word, the more we are going to find those blessings. When we think about this, part of us probably wishes we knew what passages Jesus talked about. What did he talk about from Moses? What did he talk about from the Prophets? Why didn't God record that for us? That would be helpful. I think the answer though is kind of obvious. It's because the Lord wants us to get ourselves into Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms and get into the Old Testament and see all these pictures. And then look at the New Testament and see the fulfillment. See what God thinks about sin as you look in the Old Testament and you see these

blood sacrifices again and again and again, and you see how God describes his feelings towards sin. You know it's not something we can make up and fix ourselves. So then you dig into the Old Testament more and you see his promises that he would do it all. He would be the Lord our righteousness as he says in Jeremiah.

Then that's what we rejoice in... that Jesus came. But think about all those times we've despised God's Word and not made use of it fully and faithfully. And we are comfortable being lazy and just staying back and saying, "Well that's the way we've always done it. I don't need to think about God's Word." That's where our comfort is because Christ is perfect in all those places that we fall short. He dug into the Word. He handled the Word the way that God wants it to be handled by each one of us. He did it in our place, to be our righteousness. Then he died as the punishment for our sins and took all of our sins away. That love that God has for us? That love is so amazing. That is what moves us to focus on God and on Jesus and not on ourselves. That's kind of hard for us to do at times, isn't it?

Focus on Christ. Let's focus on his Word. Let's not just make it a Sunday thing. Make it a daily thing. Find time for the Word. It doesn't have to be a lot, but find time for the Word so that the Spirit can open your eyes so that your heart can burn, in a good way. Amen.