

The First Breakfast

Acts 3:12-19

Luke 24: 36b-48

April 14, 2024

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Acts 3:12-19

When Peter saw it, he addressed the people, “You Israelites, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our ancestors has glorified his servant Jesus, whom you handed over and rejected in the presence of Pilate, though he had decided to release him. But you rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And by faith in his name, his name itself has made this man strong, whom you see and know; and the faith that is through Jesus has given him this perfect health in the presence of all of you. “And now, friends, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers. In this way God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, that his Messiah would suffer. Repent therefore, and turn to God so that your sins may be wiped out.

Luke 24: 36b-48

Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. He said to them, “Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.” And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?” They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate in their presence. Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled.” Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, and he said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.

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Some began as disciples of John the Baptist who later walked away from their fishing nets. One was called away from his tax collector’s booth, others were compelled by Jesus’ ministry to follow him. Each of the disciples and the circle of followers had been first-hand witnesses to the healings of some who were blind, deaf, lame, lepers or were overwhelmed by demons. They had seen a bleeding woman healed by the simple faith of touching the hem of Jesus’ robe. They had seen Lazarus restored from the grave. They had seen thousands fed with some loaves of bread and a few fish. They had heard his preaching and teaching in the fields and in the synagogue. They saw some Pharisees feel threatened by Jesus’ teachings, and they experienced Sadducees attempting to discredit Jesus.

Witnessing even one of these events could be life-changing, faith-forming, all by itself. But for Jesus’ closest circle, this—and more—were everyday life. Yet out of all of those

incredible encounters, this first morning, this breakfast, with the risen Christ, the Author of life, may just be the most pivotal moment in their lives, the most profound encounter they have ever have with Jesus. They have been witnesses to so much over the past few years, but now the resurrected and scarred Christ—a peace bringing Christ who they are invited to see and to touch, to closely observe and poke the raw marks of the flog and the nails—a hungry Christ who joined them for a breakfast of broiled fish—offers his body, his presence, which belongs to both dimensions of God’s world--both heaven and earth.

The disciples and followers are frightened, they have doubts. Yet from this encounter they will become witnesses of all that they have experienced, seen and heard.

We see that it mattered greatly to Jesus that his followers – then and now-- encountered his physical reality. His resurrection was both spiritual and physical. As a risen, physical, presence, he takes our physical world very seriously indeed. The risen Christ is not outside of the everyday reality of our livingⁱ.

Biblical scholar Teresa Dávilaⁱⁱ notes that while we are likely intended to read Jesus' resurrection as a victory, it is not a victory without cost. His body bears the marks of his struggle. His hands and feet, though once again alive, are scarred by his interactions with the Roman Empire. Victory didn't erase the scars. He continued to carry on his own skin the evidence of a life lived in radical commitment to God's love and justice. All of his ministry was created in the face of the destructive patterns of the Roman Empire. Even his ultimate victory will always be remembered in light of his great vulnerability. His wounds were there. They knew it was him because they saw them. It did them no good to pretend that they weren't there. In fact, according to Dávila, it reminds us that "the work of building the beloved community takes place within history and within our wounded bodies." The presence of Christ's wounds helps show us that our own woundedness has a place in our community. We don't have to hide it in order to take part.

Just as the disciples encountered the risen Christ, we, too, encounter Christ every day. We worship as Christ's body. We serve as Christ's body. With our own wounds and scars, we worship and we serve as Christ’s body.

In *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability*, theologian and professor Nancy Eieslandⁱⁱⁱ cautions us not to take lightly the fact that Jesus came back to life with his body visibly broken. She wrote that, “The foundation of Christian theology is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Yet seldom is the resurrected Christ recognized as a deity whose hands, feet, and side bear the marks of profound physical impairment.” “In presenting his impaired body to his startled friends, the resurrected Jesus is revealed as the disabled God.” His injuries remain an essential part of his resurrected identity.

Do we ever stop to realize that we follow in the footsteps of a disabled God? Jesus proved that he was alive and approachable by risking real engagement. Real presence. "Here is how you can recognize me. By my hands and my feet. See? I have scars. I have baggage. I have history. I am alive to pain, just as you are. I am not immune; I am real.”

Jesus is God’s wounded healer: through his wounds we are healed. Jesus’ suffering and death brought joy and life. His humiliation brought glory; his rejection brought a community of love. As followers of Jesus we can also allow our wounds to bring healing to others, and to ourselves.

UCC Minister for Worship and Theology Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay says of this pivotal moment in Christ’s life: “The Word is still being made flesh. That life requires something of us. As resurrection people, we cannot be content to be idle bystanders. We are witnesses, compelled to touch and see the world and participate in its transformation into the kin-dom of God.”

We are in the long descendent line of witnesses who saw and touched the wounds of Christ in that pivotal and profound morning encounter. We are in the long descendent line of witnesses who fed breakfast to a hungry Christ and were forever fed in return.

Scarred and hungry. This is our God. This is resurrection. This is the Word made Flesh. May we be witnesses of these things^{iv}. Amen.

ⁱ Rev. Robin Jacobson ~ <https://trinityvernon.ca/sermons/why-did-jesus-eat-that-fish/>

ⁱⁱ María Teresa Dávila "Third Sunday of Easter," *Preaching God's Transforming Justice: A Lectionary Commentary, Year B Featuring 22 New Holy Days for Justice*, eds Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm, Ronald J. Allen, And Dale P. Andrews (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011)/ <http://www.wccucc.org/sermon-blog/our-sermon-for-april-15th-2018-looking-for-jesus-luke-2436-48>

ⁱⁱⁱ Eisland, Nancy, *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability*, Abingdon Press, 1994

^{iv} Daniel Clendinin ~ <https://www.journeywithjesus.net/lectionary-essays/current-essay?id=1750>