

**Sunday, April 30th, 2017**

*The liturgist and pastor will meet in the hall outside the choir room a couple of minutes prior to the start of the service at 10:45am. The liturgist will enter and take his/her seat. The pastor will follow, step into the pulpit, welcome everyone, and make announcements....*

*The preacher will then ask...*

“Are there any other announcements or concerns of the church that need to be made known at this time?..... Thank you.

**PRELUDE**

**Dr. Elizabeth Davis**

**"Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow" - Johann Pachelbel**

**CHORAL CALL TO WORSHIP**

**"Rejoice in the Day!" - Dan Dykema**

**The Choir**

*After the Prelude, the liturgist should step to the lectern and say,*

“Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Psalm 145 and printed in our bulletins?”

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

(adapted from Psalm 145)

I will extol you, my God and King, and bless your name forever and ever.

**Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; his greatness is unsearchable.**

One generation shall laud your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

**The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed, and I will declare your greatness.**

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

**The Lord is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.**

All your works shall give thanks to you, O Lord, and all your faithful shall bless you.

**They shall make known to all people your mighty deeds, and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.**

The Lord upholds all who are falling, and raises up all who are bowed down.

**The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food in due season.**

The Lord is just in all his ways, and kind in all his doings.

**The Lord is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.**

He fulfills the desire of all who fear him; he also hears their cry, and saves them.

**My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord, and all flesh will bless his holy name forever & ever.**

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Dear God, as we go along our life's way, help us to be aware of your presence with us. Open our eyes, make us expectant, eager to be met by you. Give us open minds, open eyes, open hearts to receive your gracious presence. May we find the joy that only you can give and discover your truth as we share your word with with one another. Reveal yourself to us, Lord, that we may ever after know you as the resurrection, the way, the truth, and the life. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “Christ Is Alive”, number 108 in our Hymnal.

*The liturgist should step back from the microphone for the hymn.*

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE**

“Christ Is Alive”

*The Hymnal #108*

*After the hymn, the preacher will step into the pulpit and say...*

**\*CALL TO CONFESSION**

If we say that we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But, if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and quick to forgive all our transgressions. In penitence and faith, let us pray together the prayer of confession in our bulletins, pausing at its conclusion for a moment of silent prayer. Let us pray...

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

(In Unison)

O God, we confess that we rush through our days unaware of your presence with us. We fill our lives with “busy-ness” without reference to any purpose larger than our own pleasure. We strive for financial success and personal recognition, while you call us to obedience, truth, and love. Enlarge our limited vision and fill us with the courage to respond to Christ's transforming call. Open our eyes so that we may rediscover the delight and joy of lives fully committed to following Jesus. Amen.

**\*SILENT CONFESSION**

*Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.*

**\*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

Who is in a position to condemn.... only Christ. And Christ was born for us and died for us. Christ was raised in power for us. Even now he sits at the right hand of the Father and intercedes for us ... Friends believe the Good News!

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

**\*GLORIA PATRI**

*The Hymnal #579*

***Glory be to the Father, & to the Son, & to the Holy Ghost;  
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
World without end. Amen, Amen.***

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

All of us who have been buried with him in baptism have been raised with him into a new and living hope. Let us share the peace of Christ with one another. The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

*Share the peace of Christ with others as you will.*

*After a few moments, the liturgist will step into pulpit and say...*

“At this time I want to invite all of our younger friends to come forward for a Word from the Lord brought to them by Ms. Karen.”

*The liturgist will take a seat.*

**CHILDREN’S SERMON**

*(All Singing)*

***Jesus friend so kind and gentle, little ones we bring to thee;  
Grant to them thy dearest blessing. Let thine arms around them be;  
Now enfold them in thy goodness, from all danger keep them free.***

*As the children leave, the Liturgist will return to the lectern and say...*

“Would all who are able, please stand and join in one voice to sing our next hymn, “Open My Eyes, That I May See”, hymn #324 in the *Hymnal*.

**\*HYMN OF PREPARATION**

“Open My Eyes, That I May See”

*The Hymnal #324*

*After the hymn, the liturgist will return to the pulpit and say,*

**THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

**Please be seated.** . . All that we possess is a part of God's gift to the world. God's gift in Jesus Christ reminds us that what is entrusted to us is meant to be shared. Let us express our thanks to God for all that is more precious than gold, as we continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings...

*The liturgist will sit down until the Doxology begins to play.*

**THE OFFERTORY**

**"Pastorale in F Major" - J.S. Bach**

**Dr. Elizabeth Davis**

**\*DOXOLOGY (In Unison)**

*The Hymnal #592*

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow;***

***Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

*After the Doxology, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...*

**\*OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray... Let us pray... with joy and thanksgiving we return this portion of the abundance you have entrusted to us for the work of your kingdom. May our hearts follow our treasure into a growing devotion to your truth and expanded commitment to the reveal your love and your will to all people. We want others to experience what we have begun to realize in company with one another and with you. To that end, bless and receive our offerings of this day. Amen.

**\*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

“The Apostles’ Creed”

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into Hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick & the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

*Invite the congregation to... “Be seated,” and take a seat.*

**ANTHEM**

**"A Lord-Built House" - Roger Lentz/Craig Courtney**

**The Choir**

*After the choir finishes, the Liturgist will return to the lectern & say...*

**SCRIPTURE READINGS**

Our first lesson this morning is taken from the first chapter of Paul’s Letter to the Romans, beginning at the eighteenth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page 977 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.

Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed for ever! Amen.”

*The liturgist will return to his seat either on the chancel or with family or friends in the congregation. Thank you for your service.*

*When the liturgist finishes, the preacher will step into the pulpit & say...*

Our sermon text today is taken from the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke’s Gospel, beginning at the thirteenth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #920 in your pew bibles.

Listen once more for the word of God...

“That very day two of them were going to a village named Emma'us, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him.

And he said to them, "What is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk?" And they stood still, looking sad.

Then one of them, named Cle'opas, answered him, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

And he said to them, "What things?" And they said to him, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death, and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened.

Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; and they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive.

Some of those who were with us went to the tomb, and found it just as the women had said; but him they did not see."

And he said to them, "O foolish men, 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.

So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, "Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent." So he went in to stay with them.

When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the scriptures?"

And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven gathered together and those who were with them, who said, "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!"

Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## THE SERMON

“Open Eyes, Burning Hearts”

New eyes. the comedian Gallagher had an early routine about learning to see the world with new eyes, in his case the eyes of his 3 year old daughter. He worked so hard at mealtimes to teach her that the food that went in her mouth was to be swallowed not spit back out all over themselves, their high chair and the kitchen floor. And just about the time he gets her acquainted with the concept, someone introduces her to chewing gum and he had to get her to spit that out when she was through chewing.

If we saw with the new eyes that children are born with and learned that pro is the opposite of con, we might understand why congress is the opposite of progress.

Wouldn't you love to see the world with new eyes, where possibility and wonder are everywhere you look?

For so many people, including a lot of us here, we look around with our tired old eyes and we see only what life has conditioned us to see, toil, trouble, pain, disappointment.

Some of you lie in bed at night, and look over at an empty pillow next to you and all you see is emptiness. On the way home from Florida to Dallas a few weeks ago, I sat next to a businessman who a decade ago had an income twenty times what he has today. That was before oil tanked and he went broke.

A woman once asked me what to do with her memories. I asked her what she meant. "I want to go to church, but I was abused by a preacher as a young girl. And now, every time I go to church, I remember."

An old friend tells me that his wife cares more about her bridge games than she cares about him. And I have heard a real nice lady here in town tell me that her husband cares more about his golf game than her.

There's nothing wrong with these people. Their desires are healthy. One wants a strong business, another wants fulfilling worship. A spouse who'll honor their promise. Who would fault them for such dreams? They just never dreamed that their dreams would be so crushed?

What do they do now with their broken hearts? We're not talking inconveniences or hassles. We're not discussing long lines or red lights or a bad day at the office. We're talking real heartbreak. We're talking about what two friends of Jesus were feeling a couple of days after his death. Their world has fallen in on them. It's obvious by the way they walk. Their feet shuffle, their heads hang, their shoulders droop. The seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus must feel like seventy.

As they walk they talk "about everything that had happened" (v. 14). It's not hard to imagine their words. "Why did the people turn against him?"

"He could have come down from the cross. Why didn't he?"

"He just let Pilate push him around."

"What do we do now?"

As they walk, a stranger comes up behind them. It is Jesus, but they don't recognize him. Disappointment will do that to you. It will blind you to the very presence of God. Discouragement turns our eyes inward. God could be walking next to us, but despair clouds our vision.

Despair does something else. Not only does it cloud our vision, it hardens our hearts. We get cynical. We get calloused. And when good news comes, we don't want to accept it for fear of being disappointed again. That's what happened to these two people.

The women had been to the tomb, seen Jesus risen and alive, but these two boys from the boondocks weren't about to believe them. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me. Cleopas and his friend are putting their hearts in a shell. They won't take another risk. They won't be hurt again.

Common reaction-- isn't it? Been hurt by love? Then don't love.

Had a promise violated? Then don't trust.

Had your heart broken? Then don't give it away.

There is a line, a fine line, which once crossed can be fatal. It's the line between disappointment and anger. Between hurt and hate, between bitterness and blame. If you are nearing that line, let me urge you, step back and ask this question: How long am I going to pay for my disappointment? How long am I going to go on nursing my hurt?

At some point you have to move on. At some point you have to heal. At some point you have to let Jesus do for you what he did for these men.

First of all, he came to them. He didn't sit back and cross his arms and say, "Why can't those two get with the program?" He didn't complain to the angel and say, "Why won't they believe the empty tomb? Why do they have to be so obtuse?"

He met them at their point of pain. Though death has been destroyed and sin annulled, he has not retired. The resurrected Lord has once again wrapped himself in flesh, put on human clothes, searched out their hurting hearts, and asked, "What are you talking about?"

They said, "About Jesus of Nazareth. He was great prophet, but our leaders and the leading priests handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. But we were hoping that he would free Israel."

There it is. "But we were hoping ... " The disciples had hoped Jesus would free Israel. They had hoped he'd kick out the Romans. They'd hoped Pilate would be out and Jesus would be in. But Pilate

was still in, and Jesus was dead.

Unfulfilled expectations. God didn't do what they wanted him to.

They knew what they expected of Jesus. They knew what he was supposed to do. They didn't have to ask him. If Jesus is the Messiah, he won't sleep in my storm. He won't ever die. He won't defy tradition. He'll do what he is supposed to do.

But that's not what he did. And aren't we glad? Aren't we glad the prayer of Cleopas and his friend went unanswered? Aren't we glad God didn't adjust his agenda to fulfill the requests of these two disciples?

They were good disciples. With good hearts. And sincere prayers. They just had the wrong expectations.

When my daughter Maggie was little, she would have much preferred that I had continued working for in Texarkana as a drug rep, where we would have a pool in the backyard, and all of her old friends. Better still, she would have preferred that I drive the ice cream truck. So she could get popsicles and ice cream sandwiches whenever she wanted one. It made sense to her that the happiest people in the world were people who drove ice cream trucks. You play music. You sell goodies. You make kids happy. What more could you want?

But I knew better. I finally figured out what I was called to do. I opened my ears and heard His call. I opened my eyes and saw the signs. And then I understood.

God knows more about life than we do. People wanted him to redeem Israel, but he knew better. He would rather his people be temporarily oppressed than eternally lost. When forced to choose between battling Pilate and battling Satan, he chose the battle we couldn't win. He said no to what they wanted and yes to what they needed. He said no to a liberated Israel and yes to a liberated humanity.

And once again, aren't we glad he did? And aren't we glad he does? Now be honest. Are we glad he says no to what we want and yes to what we need? Not always. If we ask for a new marriage, and he says honor the one you've got, we aren't happy. If we ask for healing, and he says learn through the pain, we aren't happy. If we ask for more money, and he says treasure the unseen, we aren't always happy.

When God doesn't do what we want, it's not easy. Never has been. Never will be. But faith is the conviction that God knows more than we do about this life and he will get us through it.

Remember, disappointment is caused by unmet expectations. Disappointment is cured by revamped expectations.

I like that story about the fellow who went to the pet store in search of a singing parakeet. Seems he was a bachelor and his house was too quiet. The store owner had just the bird for him, so the man bought it. The next day the bachelor came home from work to a house full of music. He went to the cage to feed the bird and noticed for the first time that the parakeet had only one leg.

He felt cheated that he'd been sold a one-legged bird, so he called and complained.

"What do you want," the store owner responded, "a bird who can sing or a bird who can dance?"

Good question for times of disappointment. What do we want?

That's what Jesus asks the disciples. What do you want? Do you want temporary freedom-or eternal freedom? Jesus sets about the task of restructuring their expectations.

You know what he did? He told them the story. Not just any story. He told them the story of God and God's plan for people. "Then starting with what Moses and all the prophets had said about him, Jesus began to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures" (v. 27)-

Jesus' cure for the broken heart was the story of God.

He started with Moses and finished with himself. Why did he do that? Why did he retell the ancient tale? Why did he go all the way back two thousand years to the story of Moses? I think he did it because what they heard is what we all need to hear when we are disappointed.

We need to hear that God is still in control. We need to hear that it's not over until he says so. We need to hear that life's mishaps and tragedies are not a reason to bail out. They are simply a reason

to sit tight. You don't avert your eyes, you open them. You don't run away. You stand on tip toe to see if you can catch a glimpse of what God is going to do next.

The way to deal with discouragement is to go back to the story. Let it remind you that you aren't the first person to weep. And you aren't the first person to be helped.

Read the story and remember, their story is yours!

The challenge too great? Read the story.

You caught between a rock and a hard place? Read the story. That's you God parting the Red Sea to make a way for your deliverance.

Too many worries? Read the story. That's you receiving manna with the Israelites.

Your wounds too deep? Read the story. That's you, Joseph, forgiving your brothers for betraying you.

Your enemies too mighty? Read the story. That's you marching with Joshua, into a Jericho conquered by trumpets and clay pots.

Your disappointments too heavy? Read the story of the Emmaus-bound disciples. The Savior they thought was dead now walked beside them. He entered their house and sat at their table. he broke the bread and their eyes were opened, and their hearts burned with in them.

Next time you're disappointed, don't panic. Don't jettison your faith and bail out.

Just be patient and let God remind you he's still in control. It ain't over till God says it's over.

#### THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Would you pray with me... Dear Lord, wake us up this morning. Give us eyes that see & hearts that burn. Give us souls that yearn to serve, & to tell the world that our Lord is alive. We know that He is alive because He has raised us up from the deadness of our sin & given us new life in Him. We ask you to be powerfully present in all times of trial, dissolving our doubts and strengthening our faith. Be with us when we are feeling overwhelmed by stress and frustrated by events beyond our control. Bless us when we feel lonely and lost, when we are scared, when weakness overtakes us. Lead us to faith beyond sight, trust beyond doubt, and deeds beyond words, that we may live as your forgiven and forgiving children.

Lord, we are indeed unworthy to come into this holy space, but we need and long for your help and grace. Therefore, we come to you, trusting only in the comforting words which we have heard, that our souls may be cleansed by his most precious blood, and our wills become surrendered to you, that we may become true instruments of your grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray saying...

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Let all of us who are able stand and join in one voice to sing our hymn of dedication, "Without Seeing You", #2206 in our *Sing the Faith* hymnal supplements.

\*HYMN OF DEDICATION

"Without Seeing You"

*Sing the Faith* #2206

\*THE BENEDICTION

\*CONGREGATIONAL RESPONSE

(to the tune of *Edelweiss*)

"May the Lord"

May the Lord, Mighty God, bless and keep you forever.

Grant you peace, perfect peace, courage in every endeavor.

Lift up your eyes and see God's face full of grace forever.

May the Lord, mighty God, bless and keep you forever.

\*POSTLUDE

Dr. Elizabeth Davis