

Sermon Luke 24 13 35 3rd S in Easter

Sermon: 3rd Sunday of Easter

Text: Luke 24: 13-35: The disciples on the road to Emmaus

Theme: “Stay with us!”

Goal: To recognize Jesus' presence always in our lives.

Dear Friends,

Introduction: This story happened on Easter Sunday in the afternoon. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus had left the meeting with the other disciples and headed for home. On their way, Jesus appeared to them, talked a lot with them, and eventually was recognized by them when they were at the table having dinner. Immediately they ran back to Jerusalem and reported to the other disciples that they had seen the resurrected Jesus! While they were still reporting, Jesus made His first appearance to the disciples on Easter Sunday evening. - This is the background of this story.

We will focus this message on the request of the two disciples: “Stay with us!” *“Abide with me”* – as we sing in our hymn. Although they didn't recognize Jesus at the first moment, they felt that it was good for them to be with that fellow. “Stay with us, Lord” shall be our constant prayer as well.

I - ...when we are on the way.

The two disciples were on their way to Emmaus. They didn't invite Jesus to go with them. They saw Jesus dying on the cross on Good Friday and were confused about the news which the women had shared with them early in that morning. But Jesus came by Himself and walked with them. Jesus took the initiative to be with them; it was Jesus who decided to be with them.

We are always on the way: daily to our job, to our beloved ones on holidays and vacations, to enjoy the landscape on a safari, back home every evening... As Christians we usually pray to God's presence and

blessings upon our day when we wake up and when we go traveling. This is part of Jesus' promise before He went back to heaven: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt 28:20).

Some people don't recognize that Jesus is always around. They go along ways in darkness and sins, thinking that nobody sees what they are doing and where they are walking. Jesus knows everything. He wants us to avoid wrong ways and to walk on His path. As Christians we shall pray always: “Stay with us, come with us.” And the promise of Psalm 121 will be fulfilled: “The Lord will watch over your coming and going, both now and forevermore.”

II - ...when we are in troubles and doubts.

The two disciples were confused and frustrated on their way to Emmaus. They explained to that fellow who was walking with them that they had put all their trust and hope in Jesus of Nazareth. But He was put to death three days before... and now, what can they hope for from a dead martyr? They have heard from some women that His tomb was empty on Easter morning... but, they couldn't believe...

Spiritual doubts, frustration with their faith, faces downcast... How many times do we face similar situation in our lives? In spite of our faith, in spite of our Christian friends, in spite of our church and congregation, our face become sad because of *“our fears, our confusion, our pain, our anxiety and our sinfulness...”*

“...the risen Christ stands with His own and among His own... Jesus takes us in His arms to protect us. And when Jesus is with us, we know that we are blessed with the peace of His presence. At such moments, Jesus Christ comes to us, (even) without being invited, and takes the central place by calming the storms and declaring, Peace be with you!” (ABC 1250).

Having His promise, as much more we shall pray and cry: “Lord stay

with us!” in our distresses!

III - ... as we read/listen to the Bible.

Jesus comes to comfort us and to guide us in His right way in and through the Bible, His Holy Word.

Before He revealed to the two disciples that He was the resurrected Christ, He guided them to the Bible to alleviate their oppression. The Gospel reports us that Jesus said: “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

We cannot see Jesus walking and talking with us anymore, as He did with these two disciples. But the tool He used to explain to them what was happening and to comfort them is the same tool we have in our hands: The Holy Bible! “Moses and all the prophets” means the Old Testament. If we want to be comforted in our distresses, we need to go back to the Bible! We need to listen to Jesus in His Word! If we are not listening to His Word, how can He speak to us, comfort us and guide us? Therefore it is fundamental to read the Bible at home in daily devotion and to listen to the Bible as we do in our services.

The boy Samuel, in the Old Testament, offered a prayer that is an example till our days: “Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening” (1 Sm 3:10). - And the two disciples on their way to Emmaus recognized that their “hearts were burning within them while Jesus talked with them on the road and opened the Scripture to them”. The word of the Bible is powerful and warms up our hearts and lives. - “Stay with us”, Lord, as we open the Bible and read it and as we listen to your healing words.

IV - ... when we are at the table in our home.

Finally, Jesus stayed with the two disciples in their home and sat with them at the table for dinner. They had invited Him: “Stay with us. For

it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.”

Christians pray before the meals. Maybe the most common prayer at the table is: *“Come. Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed. Amen”*. Martin Luther explains that *“God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people; but we pray that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving.”* (Small Catechism). Jesus wants to bless our homes and our meals. - “Stay with us” in our home also, Lord, and bless us in whatever we do and plan. Stay with our mothers always as we are celebrating Mother's Day today.

But Jesus doesn't come to our home and to our table only. He invites **us** to come to His house and to His table as well. In the Holy Communion, we are His guests and He sits with us, partaking the bread and the wine with us – His very body and very blood, given and shed for us. This is a unique privilege of the Christians. He strengthens us weekly for a life full of the Spirit!

Conclusion: When we recognize the presence of the resurrected Jesus with us always, we want to share this blessing with the other disciples, as the two disciples did, running fast back to Jerusalem and telling them what had happened. Our Christian testimony in words and deeds show to the world that Jesus is with us and that He wants to be with all as well. He is not just the Savior of half a dozen; but He died and rose again for all. We are His disciples in the 21st Century to proclaim His blessings of forgiveness, love and hope to our fellows. We are still celebrating Easter with joy and hope; and every Sunday we come together we proclaim to all that we believe that Jesus rose from the death on a Sunday and is alive and among us. We enjoy the presence of Jesus in our lives, and we invite Him to stay with us always and everywhere.

He accepts our invitation and His promise is faithful: “And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Amen.

Pastor Carlos Walter Winterle - Cape Town, 08 May 2011

