

THE HOPE JOURNAL

LEARNING TO LOVE, TOGETHER



April 23, 2023

SHARE

offering life to everyone

by Drew Downs

Some treat *evangelism* like a four-letter word. Or worse. Like something toxic. Can't touch it, do it, or even talk about it. Saying *we don't do that here*.

And we know the reason isn't about the idea of evangelism, but how some have narrowed our common understanding. So we choose to make an important aspect of our faith off limits to ourselves. And we refuse to share our life of faith

There is a long list of things Evangelism *isn't*. But what it *is* is sharing. Sharing what we love with other people. For the sake of being with them.

This isn't actually sales. We have no product. Beyond *us* anyway. Our time. Presence. Love.

And there are a million ways to express this. With our families and friends. Not just our neighbors or total strangers.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

*"You know we've got to find a way
To bring some loving here today".*

-Marvin Gaye

Disciples, Apostles, and Saints!

Holy Time

The church practices a way of being that matches the seasons of the earth (at least for the northern hemisphere) to a pattern of living intentionally. Not be months, but seasons of varying sizes. Advent, Christmas, the season after Epiphany, Lent, and Easter. Then the great expanse of Ordinary Time.

The currents of our time, especially as we experience the fifty days of Easter, feel *atypical*. Our way of keeping time really is anything but ordinary. This is an asset to the church and to us. If we're willing to accept those currents as something more than novel.

Last week I reminded us of seeing this time *after Lent* and *before Ordinary Time* to reflect on what we learned in our fast. What happens when we attune our lives closer to the will of God? *And also* choose to not just pretend like that was a good practice that came to its seasonal end. What if you, like I a decade ago, discovered that a life with fewer sweets makes a life with more *flavors*? When I had the shocking realization of what sweetener *hides from us*, *I didn't want to go back to it!*

Taking time to experience *and reflect* in Lent requires time to *joy in change* in Easter. Change that may be about behaviors. Or expectations. Or hopes. To joy in who we are. And could be. And may yet discover is still possible.

This takes time. Holy time. Precious time we might ordinarily squander. Or spend on normal things. Things with no chance of changing us. Or even producing any, let alone lasting joy.

With love,
Drew

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FOR SUNDAY

Third Sunday of Easter

April 23, 2023

Collect

O God, whose blessed Son made himself known to his disciples in the breaking of bread: Open the eyes of our faith, that we may behold him in all his redeeming work; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

Reading

Luke 24:13–35

Now on that same day two of Jesus' disciples were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over 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 these things took place. Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, and when they did not find his body there, they came back and told us that they had indeed 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 they did not see him." Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these

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things and then enter into his glory?" Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Reflection

Notice how the men are incredulous that this stranger would not know what has happened in Jerusalem. And they proceed to share it with him. And then what they experienced. Not as an imposition, but as a sort of sharing. This is a moment of fellowship. And the stranger share in it himself.

Then they eat together. Sharing. Fellowship. And also learning and teaching. All one.

Our own thoughts—about Jesus, discipleship, mission—can be as literal as theirs are here. Incredulous about the experience of others. That teaching is passed down hierarchically, officially. Because we see it all—theology, history, tradition—as fixed.

But Jesus shows up. And they *experience* his presence with them. It isn't about what they learn, but that *in him* they learn. And then share it with everyone.

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