# Congregational-Presbyterian Church

 **“With Eyes of Faith”**

**Luke 24:13-31**

 **April 11, 2021**

How do you deal with disappointment in your life? There are times when our hopes, our dreams, and our faith in God take a hit, when what we think should be true for our lives turns out not to be the case. The two disciples in our text this morning were certainly disappointed by the events of the past couple of days. Jesus, the one in whom they had placed their hopes, had suffered and died. We read their story in Luke 24:13-31

That same day two of Jesus’ followers were walking to the village of Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem. As they walked along they were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things, Jesus himself suddenly came and began walking with them. But God kept them from recognizing him. He asked them, “What are you discussing so intently as you walk along?” They stopped short, sadness written across their faces. Then one of them, Cleopas, replied, “You must be the only person in Jerusalem who hasn’t heard about all the things that have happened there the last few days.” “What things?” Jesus asked. “The things that happened to Jesus, the man from Nazareth,” they said. “He was a prophet who did powerful miracles, and he was a mighty teacher in the eyes of God and all the people. But our leading priests and other religious leaders handed him over to be condemned to death, and they crucified him. We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel. This all happened three days ago. Then some women from our group of his followers were at his tomb early this morning, and they came back with an amazing report. They said his body was missing, and they had seen angels who told them Jesus is alive! Some of our men ran out to see, and sure enough, his body was gone, just as the women had said.” Then Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn’t it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?” Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. By this time they were nearing Emmaus and the end of their journey. Jesus acted as if he were going on, but they begged him, “Stay the night with us, since it is getting late.” So he went home with them. As they sat down to eat, he took the bread and blessed it. Then he broke it and gave it to them. Suddenly, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. And at that moment he disappeared!

“We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel.” We thought that this man was the promised Messiah who would free us from the Romans. We hoped he would bring about a new world order, the kingdom of God in which Israel would play a central role. And, for a while it looked like that is who he was. He was meeting the requirements for the Messiah: a prophet, check; a miracle worker, check; a mighty teacher, check; freeing Israel, no check. Instead he suffered horribly and died a cruel death, and we are still in bondage to Rome.

What have you hoped about Jesus that has not happened? What have you thought he would do for you, that he would be for you, that has not come true? I had hoped that I would have many more years with my mother, but she died unexpectedly. I had hoped that my son and his wife would be together all their lives, but she divorced him. I had hoped that my new boss would appreciate my ministry, but he made it clear he preferred someone else. It’s hard to see Jesus with our spiritual eyes when our physical eyes are full of the tears of anger or sadness, or both. Caught up in the hopelessness of a situation, we become blinded to what God is doing beyond that current circumstance. So it was with these two disciples.

But, Jesus hasn’t given up on us. He still walks the road of this life with us, even when our eyes of faith have been blinded by our interpretation of what is going on in our life and in the world around us. And, he invites us to do what he invited his two disciples to do: open up the revealed Word of God and pay attention to *all* of it. “You find it hard to believe *all* that the prophets wrote in the Scripture,” Jesus says to them. They had picked up on the parts they liked – prophet, miracle worker, and teacher – but skipped over or misunderstood the parts about a Messiah who would have to suffer. Allow the Bible to inform your hope, your expectations, your view of reality, including the reality of suffering, and you will see things more clearly. You will see with eyes of faith.

What the disciples needed, and what you and I need when our hopes don’t match reality, is a good dose of God’s promises, and that is precisely what Jesus gives them. While traveling down the road, Jesus leads the greatest Bible study ever held. And, as they themselves would later proclaim, their slow-to-believe hearts began to warm up. Hope rose and belief was strengthened as Scripture was shared.

Jesus showed up for these sad-sack disciples who were wallowing in their disappointed hopes, and Jesus continues to show up for you and for me. He warmed their cold hearts, and he is able to warm our hearts when they’ve grown cold. When eyes of faith are continually being informed by Scripture, we will see the One who has promised never to leave us or forsake us. He is alive, and we live our best life in him.