**Study for Stewardship Sunday #1, Oct. 13, 2024 – Luke 24:13-35**

**Discipleship:** *An Instrument of Serenity*

**Focus Question:** *This week how might you be an instrument of serenity?*

**word** *of life* **“When [Jesus] 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.”**  (Luke 24: 30-31 NRSV)

Read Luke 24:13-35

*13Now on that same day [when Jesus had appeared to Mary Magdalene,] two [disciples] were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, 14and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. 15While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, 16but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. 17And he said to them, “What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?” They stood still, looking sad. 18Then 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?” 19He 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, 20and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. 21But 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. 22Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, 23and 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. 24Some 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.” 25Then he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! 26Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?” 27Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.*

*28As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. 29But 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. 30When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. 31Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. 32They 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?” 33That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. 34They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!” 35Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.*

Much had taken place in Jerusalem the week Jesus died and rose from death. Life no longer made sense to the followers of Jesus, and some had already left Jerusalem talking about the events of the week. Jesus appears to two men who were walking from Jerusalem to a town called Emmaus. As Jesus walks with them, they do not recognize him.

These anxious and disturbed men are a contrast to the serene Jesus. Patiently, Jesus listens as they recount the events occurring to Jesus, but they do not recognize the risen Jesus beside them.

1. *Describe the possible feelings of the men on the road to Emmaus.*
2. *What might have prevented the men from seeing Jesus at this part of the walk?*

Jesus tells these two men they are foolish for not being able to make sense and believe in the risen Christ. He then proceeds to interpret those things recounted in the Old Testament from Moses through the prophets. As Jesus teaches, he connects the events from the past to the current reality.

1. *What would it have been like to walk with Jesus on the road to Emmaus?*
2. *If you were on that walk, what questions would you ask Jesus?*
3. *How do you connect the Old Testament with the life and death of Jesus?*

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The two men still do not perceive it is Jesus who is walking with them and teaching them. How can that be? They urge Jesus to stay with them for dinner. The scene is reminiscent of the last supper. Again, Jesus takes bread, blesses and breaks it, then gives it to them. It is in the breaking of the bread the disciples have their eyes open so that they truly see Jesus. As soon as they recognize Jesus, he disappears.

1. *What connections might be made between this meal and the last supper?*
2. *Why do you think Jesus disappeared so quickly?*
3. *What else might the disciples have asked if Jesus had not disappeared?*

The anxiety of the disciples is transformed into energetic joy. The words of the women and disciples are true. Jesus is alive. “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?’” (Luke 24:32 NRSV)

1. *What would it have been like to have your heart burn because of the teaching of Jesus?*
2. *By the end of the walk, what prevented these followers of Jesus from recognizing him?*

Within the hour, they began walking the return trip of over seven miles from Emmaus to Jerusalem. They could not wait to join others in the Easter proclamation, “The Lord has risen indeed!” (Luke 24:34 NRSV)

1. *How would this proclamation have been received by the others?*

**word** *among us*

Their grandfather sat out on the patio near the garden. He was a picture of serenity. Yet in the house, there was chaos. Many would call the family “dysfunctional”. The family thought their yelling and fighting were typical of all families. The children did not know any different pattern of family life.

Since their grandfather had moved in with them, things were changing slowly. It was strange. Their grandfather never yelled back. Consequently, there seemed to be less yelling and swearing by others. It was hard to describe, but their grandfather was so calm. He had an inner peace which was a bit unnerving to the household. Yet, it was also attractive.

1. *How would you define “serenity”?*
2. *How does one obtain “serenity”?*
3. *If by chance someone develops the characteristic of “serenity”, how does one keep such a perspective?*
4. *How can a serene person be both unsettling and attractive to others?*

Throughout the season of Easter, *Daily Discipleship* is using the Serenity Prayer in its reflection. Reflect on the word *serenity* as you pray, “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.”

1. *Who in your life has modeled “serenity”?*
2. *Describe a time in your life when you felt the gift of “serenity”?*
3. *What has or needs to change in your life so that you experience more serenity?*

As Jesus walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, he might have been described as serene. His calmness was certainly a contrast from the anxious and distraught disciples. They had witnessed events which turned their world upside down. Jesus attempted to help them make sense by returning to the Scriptures. He did not hash over the injustice of the crucifixion, nor did he spend time describing the pain of the experience. Jesus helped connect the teaching of the old with the reality of the resurrection.

The disciples seemed to have understood, but not fully. Because they could not grasp who was teaching them, there was a significant missing piece to the puzzle. For whatever reasons, they could not see Jesus. Once Jesus was revealed to them in the breaking of the bread, then things began to make sense. They had an “Aha!” moment. At that point, those disciples could not contain or limit their excitement. They were willing to walk over seven miles from Emmaus to Jerusalem to tell the good news about Jesus Christ.

1. *What might prevent us from seeing and hearing Jesus?*
2. *What are we willing to do in order to tell someone about Jesus Christ?*

**Prayer of the Day**

O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread, grant me serenity to face the challenges and opportunities today. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever., Amen

 *last* **word**

Pray each day the Serenity Prayer: God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,

courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.