

Why Jesus Reveals Himself in Word and Sacrament

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Intro: Rebecca's waking up happy on Easter, which her husband Chris says is the TRUE Easter Miracle! We need to remember, that on the first Easter morning things were not very cheerful.

Luke 24:28-35

My Paraphrase: On the first Easter Sunday, two of the disciples were on their way to Emmaus, which was about 7 miles from Jerusalem. They were talking together about all the events that had transpired. While they trying to get their heads around it all, Jesus comes up and starts walking with them, but they allowed to recognize him. So he asks, "What are you talking about?" And they just stop right in the middle of the road and look at him, their faces full of grief.

One of the two named Cleopas says, "You're kidding, right? You must be the only human within a hundred miles who doesn't know what's been going on. We were just talking about Jesus of Nazareth, who was an incredibly powerful prophet who walked the talk, and about how our religious and civic leaders flipped him to the Romans who crucified him. We thought he was our Great Hope for restoring Israel. Now it's been three days, and when some of the women in our group went to prepare his body for burial, they found the tomb he had been laid in empty instead bumped into some angels who said he was alive. Since they were women, of course we thought they got mixed up and went to the wrong tomb and gotten hysterical or something, but some of the men went to the tomb, and sure enough, he wasn't there.

Then Jesus says, “You guys must not be too bright! You sure are slow to believe what prophets had said along. Isn’t this the way things were supposed to be – that the promised Messiah would suffer and then be revealed in all his glory? And then starting with the greatest prophet Moses and working his way down, he explained all the things about himself found in the scripture.

This is how the story concludes...

Luke 24: 28 As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on.²⁹ 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.³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight.³² 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?”³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem; and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together.³⁴ They were saying, “The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!”³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

The seven mile walk, as the larger 40 or so days between Jesus' crucifixion and ascension, are examples of liminal space.

In liminal space:

We move from an original orientation – our understanding of how things are – through utter disorientation until we have a completely new orientation in which we see more of what God is doing and can hold more of the mystery.

We live in what is often called the “now and the not yet” – the realization that we are living in a whole new reality that has been fully realized or revealed.

Common examples of liminal space help us understand why we need them:

- The summer between high school and college.
- Being engaged to be married.
- Being pregnant.
- Leaving one job, packing up and moving, and taking a new job.
- Empty-nesting
- Hospice care

Liminal space gives us the gift of time to adjust, to adapt, to grow.

The time Jesus gives to his disciples between crucifixion and Pentecost is an incredible gift. It is the gift of time they and we need to wrap our heads and our hearts around some really huge ideas. Ideas like:

- Our personal friend Jesus is also the universal Christ;
- The path of transformation isn't an upward path marked by more power and success; it is downward path marked by suffering love;
- The great divorce between the material and spiritual, the world-we-see and the reality-we-cannot-see, is brought together once and for all through by Christ, through Christ, and in Christ.

This last truth is the one we celebrate whenever we come to the Lord's table. The physical meal is where we experience Christ's real Presence. The great truths revealed in God's word are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. By this we learn that truth is not an idea. It is a relationship.

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