**“Jesus, the Revealed Christ” [[1]](#footnote-1)**

We have just celebrated the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ. He is risen! He’s alive! And we can praise God for the wonder and power of his resurrection.

As we read the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles concerning the brief sojourn of Jesus with his disciples between the resurrection and the ascension, the varied accounts of the appearances of Jesus are brief. Yet, according to biblical commentators, these accounts cover a period of time of about 40 days.

Jesus revealed himself to individuals, to small groups of disciples, and to larger groups of those who loved and followed him. His appearances took place from Jerusalem and Judea northward into Galilee. He revealed himself behind locked doors, on roadways, and on seashores.

But Jesus also revealed himself as the promised Comforter / Counsellor. He is revealed in the communal life of the early church. He is revealed in the lives of the early Christians, such as Phillip when he encounters the Ethiopian eunuch. He is revealed to Saul, later renamed Paul, on the road to Damascus.

Jesus is still being revealed as Christians today, become ‘living objects lessons of God’s love’ in their day-to-day lives. He is revealed to family members, friends, and neighbours as he continues to live in the hearts and lives of those who profess his name and presence.

And there will be a time when Jesus will be revealed to the whole world; where **“. . . every knee will bow to the name of Jesus – everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.** **And everyone will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and bring glory to God the Father.”** (Philippians 2:10-11)

This sermon series, **“Jesus – the Revealed Christ,”** invites you to walk along the road to Emmaus, to check out the nail prints in his hands, and share breakfast on the beach. This series invites you to walk with Jesus on your own journey of faith, to develop a deep relationship with him, and acknowledge Jesus as your personal Savior and Friend.

April 24, 2022 **“Prove It!”**

Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages 3-10)

**Part 1** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

**Scripture Reading:** John 20:19-31 NCV

May 1, 2022 **“On the Road to Emmaus”**

 Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages 11-21)

**Part 2** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

 **Scripture Reading**: Luke 24:13-35 NCV

May 8, 2022 **“Mothers – Motivation and Mission”**

***“Celebrating Mother’s Day”***

Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages 22-)

**Part 3** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

**Scripture Reading**: John 21:15-19 NCV

May 15, 2022 **Special Service with our District Superintendent, Rev. Steve Ottley**

May 22, 2022 **“Commissioned: It Doesn’t Have to Really Be Quite So Hard!”**

 Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages )

**Part 4** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

**Scripture Reading**: John 20:19-23; Luke 24:38-49; Mark 16:15-18; Matthew 28:18b-

20; Acts 1:8 NCV

May 29, 2012 **“Return to Galilee - Breakfast by the Sea”**

Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages )

**Part 5** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

**Scripture Reading:** John 21:1-19 NCV

June 5, 2022 **“‘Don’t Just Stand There – Do Something!” Ascension Sunday**

 Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages )

**Part 6** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

**Scripture Reading**: Matthew 28:16-17; Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20;

 Acts 1:9-11; Luke 22:52; Acts 1:12-14; Luke 22:53; Mark 16:20 NCV

June 12, 2012 **“Power, Purity and Proclamation!” Pentecost Sunday**

Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages )

**Part 7** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

**Scripture Reading**: Acts 2:1-4 NCV

June 19, 2022 **“Communicating Christ Effectively!”**

Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages )

**Part 8** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

**Scripture Reading**: Acts 8:26-40 NCV

June 26, 2022 **“A Close Encounter of the Supernatural Kind!”**

 Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages )

**Part 9** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

**Scripture Reading**: Acts 9:1-31 **NCV**

July 3, 2012 **“Meet Me at Your House!”**

Pastor Leigh Straiton (Pages )

**Part 10** of the series **"Jesus, the Revealed Christ”**

**Scripture Reading**: Revelation 3:20 NCV

**“Jesus, the Revealed Christ: ‘Prove It!’”**

**Scripture Reading:** John 20:19-31 NCV

**“19When it was evening on the first day of the week, Jesus’ followers were together. The doors were locked, because they were afraid of the elders. Then Jesus came and stood right in the middle of them and said, “Peace be with you.” 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. His followers were thrilled when they saw the Lord.**

**21Then Jesus said again, “Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, I now send you.” 22After he said this, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven. If you don’t forgive them, they are not forgiven.”**

**24Thomas (called Didymus), who was one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. 25The other followers kept telling Thomas, “We saw the Lord.”**

**But Thomas said, “I will not believe it until I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side.”**

**26A week later the followers were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. The doors were locked, but Jesus came in and stood right in the middle of them. He said, “Peace be with you.” 27Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand here in my side. Stop being an unbeliever and believe.”**

**28Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”**

**29Then Jesus told him, “You believe because you see me. Those who believe without seeing me will be truly blessed.”**

**30Jesus did many other miracles in the presence of his followers that are not written in this book. 31But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Then, by believing, you may have life through his name.”(John** **20:19-31)**

Let us pray: (Jesus Calls Ministries, © 2022 All rightrs reserved)

**Heavenly Father!**

**Thank you for using me in your ministry!**

**Thank you for guiding me to this point in my life and my faith journey!**

**Thank you for granting me your grace!**

**Even now Lord, you know the purpose for which I come to you.**

**O Lord, the Scripture says that you were with your great servants of the past, using them to bring your children out of bandage – whether it was physical or spiritual.**

**Today Lord, fill me with the same grace, anointing and power so that I can preach your word boldly and with authority for the deliverance of those under the bondages of sin.**

**I'm unworthy Lord, but make me worthy by cleansing me and filling me with your Holy Spirit.**

**I am only an empty vessel Master.**

**Fill me, Lord.**

**Let your Holy Spirit take full control of me and let him speak, not me.**

**You know the needs of the people who'll be listening to this preaching.**

**I submit myself to you so that you can use me in whichever way you want to.**

**I choose to glorify only you Lord.**

**I do not want any glory for me because I'm just clay in your hands.**

**In Jesus' name I pray,**

**AMEN**

**Introduction**

As most of you know, Joyce grew up on a farm just west of Meaford – on the 11th Line of St. Vincent Township.

Because she had no brothers, Joyce was her dad’s ‘right-hand-man’ – and from the time she can remember, she was always going on the tractor with her dad.

He had an old Allis Chalmers tractor (made the same year she was born – 19 hundred and something . . .)

It was the hardest thing to drive and steer, because of its very narrow front wheels . . . but that is another story!

On this one particular occasion, Joyce, her Dad, and her sister Jan coming up from the back of the farm.

Joyce’s Dad had been working up a field at the back of the farm with a tiller – a 500 pound monstrosity with steel wheels, one of which had a steel ridge around it.

Now Joyce’s Dad was very particular about riding with him – they had to sit quietly on the fender of the tractor.

Now her sister, Jan was sitting quietly (because that was the rule), but for some reason unknown to anyone, Joyce decided that she could jump off the back and jump back onto the tractor again – just to prove something, I guess.

So she did . . . and her foot slipped, and the next thing she know, the steel ridge of the wheel was slicing through her leg, cutting it to the bone and part way around her shin.

Joyce does not remember the next few moments or even hours.

All she knows is, her Dad rushed her to Dr. Findlay, who stitched up her leg – and covered it with a bandage.

This incident happened decades ago, but to this day, she has this horrible,

 deep,

 tender,

 ugly scar on the inside of her right lower leg.

It is a constant reminder of a day that went horribly wrong.

A constant reminder of a stupid choice.

A constant reminder that life can be painful . . . but we do heal!

I bear several scars that are reminders of significant events in my past.

A scar on my right knee where, after tripping and falling and completely splitting my kneecap in half, Dr. Adlington performed emergency surgery to put it back together again so that I would be able to walk.

A scar on my lower back where a Calgary neurosurgeon removed damage to my spine that would have paralyzed me.

A large scar on my abdomen where Dr. Stephen Gallinger in Toronto General Hospital performed an 11-hour surgery, August 2007 to remove a large tumour, taking out half of my stomach and other bits and pieces – 2 ½ feet worth.

All of these scars constant reminders of what was . . . and what might have been if the surgeries were not performed.

In the scripture which we just read today; we are able to ‘eavesdrop’ on another conversation among the followers of Jesus.

Jesus has already revealed himself to ‘the Marys’,

 to Cleopas and his companion on the road to Emmaus,

 to Peter, and to the other nine disciples – all . . . except Thomas.

For reasons which we are never really told, Thomas does not seem to be with the disciples.

They obviously had communication because they told Thomas that they have seen Jesus.

Thomas had been told that Jesus had revealed himself to them, and they know he is alive!

Each and every one – save Thomas – declares:

**“We saw the Lord.”** (John 20:24)

But when Thomas finally joins up with them, he is not convinced.

He responds with uncertainty:

**“I will not believe it until I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were and put my hand into his side.”** (John 20:25)

Because of that statement, Thomas is often referred to as “Doubting Thomas.”

He is often judged because basically said, “Prove it!”

He wanted to see the evidence for himself that Jesus is alive.

Where was his faith, we might ask?

Do you believe that Jesus is alive,

 that he was crucified and rose again on the third day and now sits at the right hand of God the Father?

It is this one fact that sets Christianity apart from every other religion . . . the firsthand affirmation – as recorded in the Gospels, and in the epistles – that Jesus is alive!

* Mary Magdalene: **“I saw the Lord!”** (John 20:18)
* Travellers to Emmaus: **“. . . then, they were allowed to recognize Jesus . . . The Lord really has risen from the dead! He showed himself to Simon.”** (Luke 24:31, 34)
* Angels at the tomb: **“Don’t be afraid. You are looking for Jesus from Nazareth, who has been crucified. He has risen from the dead; he is not here. Look, here is the place they laid him. Now go and tell his followers and Peter, ‘Jesus is going into Galilee ahead of you, and you will see him there as he told you before.”** (Mark 16: 6-7)
* The Pharisees:

**“The next day, the day after Preparation Day, the leading priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate. They said, “Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive he said, ‘After three days I will rise from the dead.’ So give the order for the tomb to be guarded closely till the third day. Otherwise, his followers might come and steal the body and tell people that he has risen from the dead. That lie would be even worse than the first one.”**

**Pilate said, “Take some soldiers and go guard the tomb the best way you know.”**

**While the women went to tell Jesus’ followers, some of the soldiers who had been guarding the tomb went into the city to tell the leading priests everything that had happened. Then the priests met with the elders and made a plan. They paid the soldiers a large amount of money and said to them, “Tell the people that Jesus’ followers came during the night and stole the body while you were asleep. If the governor hears about this, we will satisfy him and save you from trouble.” So the soldiers kept the money and did as they were told. And that story is still spread among the people even today.”** (Matthew 27:62-65; 28:11-15)

Can you declare that Jesus is alive?

What would it take to prove that he is?

Josephus, a secular historian during the time of Jesus, stated that, without the resurrection, the crucifixion of Jesus would be just another common,

 every-day Roman execution.

Historians tell us that under Roman rule, one million Jews were crucified.

Without the resurrection, Jesus would have been just another person – one amongst many – who hung on a cross to die for some act of treason against the government.

Greek philosophers believed that the human body was composed of two parts:

1. physical body
2. immortal soul.

The body would die and decay, but the soul lived on forever in an impersonal existence.

The souls of those who died lost their individuality and merged with souls that had gone on before. (Tashjian, 2012)

Paul, refuting this philosophy, states in **1 Corinthians 15** that

**“I passed on to you what I received, of which this was most important: that Christ died for our sins, as the Scriptures say; that he was buried and was raised to life on the third day as the Scriptures say; and that he was seen by Peter and then by the twelve apostles. After that, Jesus was seen by more than five hundred of the believers at the same time. Most of them are still living today, but some have died. Then he was seen by James and later by all the apostles. Last of all he was seen by me – as by a person not born at the normal time.”** (1 Corinthians 15:3-8)

He continues.

**“If no one is ever raised from the dead, then Christ has not been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is worth nothing, and your faith is worth nothing.”** (1 Corinthians 15:13-14)

The resurrection of Jesus was not to show that the soul of Jesus had somehow survived death.

The resurrection of Jesus was to show that God had raised his Son ***in triumph*** over death and sin.

Our hope is not based on the impersonal immortality of the soul, but on an immortal God who has given life to each one of us and who gives us hope of eternity. (Tashjian, 2012)

No . . . Jesus was not just one of many who were crucified in those times – he was that one in a million who died and rose again.

He lives!

But Thomas is a little different than the other disciples.

He needed visible proof that Jesus was alive.

Hearsay was not enough.

Thomas was a natural pessimist.

There was never any doubt that he loved Jesus.

He loved him enough to be willing to go to Jerusalem and die with him when the other disciples were hesitant and afraid. (see **John 11:16**)

What he had so expected with Jesus in Jerusalem had now happened, and . . . when it came, he was broken-hearted,

 so broken-hearted that he had to be alone in his grief. (Tashjian, 2012)

If you are told something which seems almost too good to be true, do you need evidence to prove that allegation?

If you ever watch any of the ***CSI’s*** or ***NCIS’s*** or ***Law and Order: Trial by Jury*** or ***Harry’s Law***, for instance, the Judge may say that “hearsay is inadmissible in court.”

Let the science prove the facts.

“Follow the evidence.”

A conscious effort is made to uncover the facts, which will prove, beyond reasonable doubt, that the allegations are true or not true.

Many highly specialized tests will authenticate the evidence, which is then presented in court before the judge and/or jury.

**“I need to see the proof!”**

**“I need to touch his hands and side.”**

Thomas absolutely refused to say that he understood what he did not understand,

 or that he believed something that he did not believe.

Thomas had to be sure that his Lord was risen.

What do you believe about Jesus today?

Is your belief based on the faith of your parents or grandparents,

 or on Christ?

Is your faith based on book knowledge or heart knowledge?

Do you know **about** Jesus,

 or do you ***know*** Jesus as your own personal Saviour?

Do you worship because it is what you are used to or feel obligated to join,

 or do you worship because ***you*** want to?

What do ***YOU*** believe about Jesus today?

What does Jesus know about you?

Does he know that you love him unconditionally,

 regardless of what life throws your way?

Does he know that your heart is open and honest and searching?

Does he know that you have your doubts about him?

Does He know that you are just going through the motions of pretending to be something you are not?

What does Jesus know about you that no one else knows?

What does the evidence of your lifestyle confirm?

Thomas needed proof.

He needed to see the scars in Jesus hands and side.

These scars became part of the fabric of evidence to prove that the resurrection was not a rumour or a figment of imagination brought about by grief and denial.

The resurrection was real.

To Thomas, that is what the scars of Jesus meant -- the Resurrection is real. (Pittendreigh, 2002)

What do the scars on the hands of Jesus mean to you?

For some, scars serve to remind us that Jesus was both fully human and fully divine.

There is something about a scar that seems to make a person more human,

 real,

 believable,

 and trustworthy.

They are testimony to the fact that “I was there!”

They are tangible evidence to our assertion!

We think about the divine nature of Christ, but sometimes we forget that he was also human, and as such, experienced the very struggles and pains of life that we do.

As human, Jesus experienced physical pain when he was whipped by Roman guards.

As human, Jesus experienced physical pain when he was nailed to the cross.

As human, Jesus experienced the emotional pain of betrayal by a close friend.

As human, Jesus experienced the anguishing pain of abandonment by all his disciples and denial by his close friend.

As human, Jesus experienced spiritual pain as he struggled with his destiny in the Garden:

**“Father, if you are willing, take away this cup of suffering. But do what you want, not what I want.”** (Luke 22:42)

As human, Jesus experienced the spiritual and emotional pain of a Heavenly Father turning his face away, as he watched his Son die under the burden of the sins of the world.

**“About three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” This means, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”** (Mathew 27:46)

The scars on Jesus’ hands are forever a reminder of his humanity . . . of the physical cost of our salvation.

Did you ever think about the fact that the Resurrection brought Jesus back to life again, but left Him scarred?

Physical scars are an indicator that there has been a physiological change: a surgical intervention,

 an accident perhaps,

 of self harm,

 of abuse.

Something traumatic has happened in your life and you are left with a scar – a reminder of the pain and suffering you experienced.

The wound will heal, but there is always a reminder of that crisis event in your life.

Physical scars verify the stories of your life experience.

If I were to ask you today, each one of you could probably show me a scar . . . and tell me the story surrounding the reason for that scar.

Maybe you jammed scissors into your leg when you were wallpapering,

 or rammed a knife into your hand when you were prying frozen pork chops apart.

Maybe you scraped your knee when you fell off a bike or fell on a rock.

Maybe your scars are from touching a hot stove when your mom said “NO!”

Maybe your scars are from surgeries you have experienced.

Every scar tells a story.

Every scar verifies that experience.

But there are emotional scars which are not so easy to see.

They are not tangible.

They may be scars from broken relationships,

 or hurtful consequences because of choices that we made.

They may be scars of abuse

 or neglect

 or abandonment.

We may bear scars from wounds that are so deep,

 so hurtful,

 so life-altering that we wonder if we will ever not hurt emotionally.

We bear the scars, but the wounds are still raw.

Thomas needed verification.

“Prove it!”

He was not a guy who bought into everything he was told.

He was cautious . . . he was not gullible.

He had to be sure.

But once he was convinced,

 once he had been shown the evidence and considered it – he was the guy at the head of the line when it came to faith and obedience.

He was the guy you could count on . . . because his doubts had been verified by the physical evidence of Jesus’ scarred hands and side.

Thomas was the first disciple, after the resurrection to declare Jesus as **“My Lord and my God!”** (John 20:21)

Jesus showed Thomas his nail-scarred hands and instructed him to touch his side, where he had been pierced with a sword.

**“Stop being an unbeliever and believe.”** (John 20:27)

Jesus went on to tell Thomas that he believed because he saw.

But Jesus also stated that there will be many who will not see and yet they will believe – and that’s ***US***!

You and me.

We do not have that same opportunity to actually touch the nail-scarred hands of Jesus.

Not yet!

I want you to think about this: Every time Jesus reached out to you – he reaches out with nail-scarred hands.

Every time he reaches out to bless,

 encourage,

 strengthen,

 support

 or carry you, he does so with nail-scarred hands.

Every time he reaches out to welcome you as a child of God, he does so with nail-scarred hands.

Because sometimes you need someone with scars to prove that they understand your pain. Because sometimes you need someone with scars to encourage you when life is falling apart. Because sometimes you need someone with scars to prove that you can survive.

Because sometimes you need someone with scars to prove that life is liveable!

Do you bear the scars of life?

Are there times when you feel wounded and broken?

Do the scars of your life verify that life can be lived well or do they tell others that life is too hard,

 the suffering is too great,

 and the pain is too much?

Do the scars or your woundedness bear witness to the power of God’s love?

We are called to share the Good News with those who still doubt,

 who still need to see and feel the scars of a broken life which has been spiritually healed, in order to believe.

Scars that testify that I have been crucified in him and I no longer live but Christ lives in me.
Are you willing to share your scars with those who need to see them?

Thomas needed to see the nail-scarred hands of his Saviour.

We read in **1 Corinthians 15** that one day, we will have new,

 perfect,

 spiritual bodies . . . like Jesus, after the resurrection.

His will be the only One in heaven with scars.

And that is to remind us of the cost of his love and purpose in God’s plan of redemption.

We have a permanently scarred God.

And he reaches out to us with scarred hands, regardless of the wounds we suffer,

 the doubts we have,

 the burdens that hinder us.

He reaches out to us in our brokenness and says, my child, I love you.

I died for you.

I want to bring you back into my family.

What an amazing demonstration of Jesus’ love for us.

That he forever bears the scars,

 those reminders of the pain and humiliation he went through for you and for me.

Will you reach out and touch the nail-scarred hands of the Saviour, like Thomas.

Can you say: **“My Lord and my God!”**

His scars are because of his great love for us.

Let us pray: (Longhurst, n.d. Retrieved April 23, 2022)

**We thank you Lord for the story of Thomas, showing us that faith was never easy and that doubt never breaks your love for us.**

**We lift up to you our demands:**

 **show me,**

 **prove it,**

 **our doubts,**

 **give me a sign . . . NOW**

**May your peace be with us.**

**We offer you: our fumbling answers when others tell us you are not real and cannot be proven.**

**May your peace be with us.**

**We offer you:**

 **our pain**

 **and reticence when we hold back from rejoicing because others can’t.**

**May your peace be with us.**

**We ask you to meet those in need of peace,**

 **in need of blessing,**

 **in need of an end to their waiting**

**May your peace be with them.**

**We do believe – help us overcome our unbelief.**

**AMEN**

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**“On the Road to Emmaus”**

**Scripture Reading[[2]](#footnote-2):** Luke 24:13-35 NCV

**“13That same day two of Jesus’ followers were going to a town named Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. 14They were talking about everything that had happened. 15While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and began walking with them, 16but they were kept from recognizing him. 17Then he said, “What are these things you are talking about while you walk?”**

**The two followers stopped, looking very sad. 18The one named Cleopas answered, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know what just happened there?”**

**19Jesus said to them, “What are you talking about?”**

**They said, “About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet who said and did many powerful things before God and all the people. 20Our leaders and the leading priests handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. 21But we were hoping that he would free Israel. Besides this, it is now the third day since this happened. 22And today some women among us amazed us. Early this morning they went to the tomb, 23but they did not find his body there. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive! 24So some of our group went to the tomb, too. They found it just as the women said, but they did not see Jesus.”**

**25Then Jesus said to them, “You are foolish and slow to believe everything the prophets said. 26They said that the Christ must suffer these things before he enters his glory.” 27Then starting with what Moses and all the prophets had said about him, Jesus began to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures.**

**28They came near the town of Emmaus, and Jesus acted as if he were going farther. 29But they begged him, “Stay with us, because it is late; it is almost night.” So he went in to stay with them.**

**30When Jesus was at the table with them, he took some bread, gave thanks, divided it, and gave it to them. 31And then, they were allowed to recognize Jesus. But when they saw who he was, he disappeared. 32They said to each other, “It felt like a fire burning in us when Jesus talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us.”**

**33So the two followers got up at once and went back to Jerusalem. There they found the eleven apostles and others gathered. 34They were saying, “The Lord really has risen from the dead! He showed himself to Simon.”**

**35Then the two followers told what had happened on the road and how they**

**recognized Jesus when he divided the bread.**

**Preamble**

We have just celebrated the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

He is risen!

He’s alive!

And we can praise God for the wonder and power of His resurrection.

As we read the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles concerning the brief sojourn of Jesus with his disciples between the resurrection and the ascension, the varied accounts of the appearances of Jesus are brief.

Yet, according to biblical commentators, these accounts cover a period of time of about 40 days.

Jesus revealed himself to individuals,

 to small groups of disciples,

 and to larger groups of those who loved and followed him.

His appearances took place from Jerusalem and Judea northward into Galilee.

He revealed himself behind locked doors,

 on roadways,

 and on sea shores.

But Jesus also revealed himself as the promised Comforter / Counsellor.

He is revealed in the communal life of the early church.

He is revealed in the lives of the early Christians, such as Stephan and Phillip.

He is revealed to Saul, later renamed Paul, on the road to Damascus.

Jesus is still being revealed as Christians today, become ‘living objects lessons of God’s love’ in their day-to-day lives.

He is revealed to family members,

 friends,

 and neighbours as he continues to live in the hearts and lives of those who profess his name and presence.

And there will be a time when Jesus will be revealed to the whole world; where

“. . . at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Philippians 2:10-11 NLT)

This sermon series, **“Jesus, the Revealed Christ,”** invites you to walk along the road to Emmaus,

 to check out the nail prints in His hands

 and share breakfast on the beach.

This series invites you to walk with Jesus on your own journey of faith,

 to develop a deep relationship with Him

 and acknowledge Jesus as your personal Savior and Friend.

Let us pray: (Dash, 2009 Retrieved April 29, 2022)

**Father, we thank you that Jesus met these two doubters in the middle of their doubt.**

**I thank you that before they even knew it, Jesus was with them, teaching them and us that all of Scripture is about him.**

**I thank you that you opened their eyes.**

**I pray today that you would open our eyes.**

**I pray that we would see all the story-lines and symbols of Scripture converge in Christ.**

**I pray that you would allow us to see the risen Christ as someone who changes everything.**

**And as a result, I pray that you would allow us the privilege of feasting at your table with you this morning, and fill us with hope that we will dine at the coming banquet you’re preparing for us.**

**Grant us this I pray, in Jesus’ name.**

**AMEN**

**Introduction**

We have all experienced it.

We have all made that long, final walk to the cemetery to bury a loved one:

 a parent,

 a grandparent,

 a brother or sister

 an aunt or an uncle,

 maybe even a child.

Hearts were broken.

Shoulders were stooped.

Eyes were red and swollen from tears.

“What am I going to do without . . .?” was the burning question, asked over and over.

Life was not making sense; death was all-consuming.

So it was with those who were followers of Jesus.

The past two weeks had been filled with emotional chaos.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Jesus had been hailed as King, and folks were hopeful that the promise which they claimed, the promise of Messiah,

 the promise of a new kingdom – they were hopeful,

 they were certain that this new kingdom was finally in the works!

But things quickly changed from hope to despair; this same person, Jesus of Nazareth – lauded as King just a few short days ago – had been cruelly and unjustly crucified, and all dreams of a new kingdom here on earth were dashed and broken.

His followers slowly made their way back to the security of the upper room,

 away from Golgotha,

 away from the Garden,

 away from the horror of a Roman crucifixion.

Hearts were broken.

Shoulders were stooped.

Eyes were red and swollen from tears.

“What are we going to do without our Master – our Friend – Jesus?”

Life was not making sense; death was all-consuming.

1. **Hearts Broken.**

Have you ever noticed that some of the saddest words in our language begin with the letter “D”: disappointment,

 doubt,

 disillusionment,

 defeat,

 despair,

 death?

All of these words described the emotional state of these two followers of Jesus as they walked that dusty road to Emmaus.

The One they had revered,

 loved

 and followed had been horribly put to death – a cruel death of the most degrading kind.

They saw it happen.

They were there.

The memory was fresh!

Only a week before, the passion

 and excitement

 and anticipation of animated crowds fueled the promise of deliverance from Roman tyranny.

Now he lay dead in a sealed tomb!

And just like all the rest of Jesus’ followers, their hopes were also shattered;

 their dreams were also demolished!

**“But we were hoping that he would free Israel.”** (Luke 24:21)

What is hope?

According to *Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary*, hope means . . .

*“. . . to trust in, wait for, look for, or desire something or someone; or to expect something beneficial in the future. In the Old Testament,* [the Children of Israel] *were encouraged to wait for God hopefully, expectantly.* [There was a] *close connection between hope and trust. Because of the requirement to trust in God alone, hope was centered on this world, a hope to be delivered from their enemies. In the New Testament, God made known His plan to bring His everlasting kingdom to earth, [through the life, death and resurrection of His Son]. In the Old Testament hope has to do with waiting for, looking for, desiring. In the New Testament, Paul speaks of* ***‘waiting with pain inside us . . . waiting for God to finish making us his own children, which means our bodies will be made free****.****’*** (Romans 8:23). ***‘We are eagerly awaiting, through the Spirit, the righteousness for which we hope’*** (Galatians 5:5*), for* ***‘. . . the true hope that comes from being made right with God, and by the Spirit we wait eagerly for this hope.’*** (Titus 2:13)” (Elwell, n.d. Retrieved April 12, 2012)

*“As hope is connected with patient endurance in the Old Testament, so in the New Testament trials lead to hope –* ***“We also have joy with our troubles, because we know that these troubles produce patience. And patience produces character, and character produces hope. And this hope will never disappoint us, because God has poured out his love to fill our hearts. He gave us his love through the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to us.”*** (Romans 5:3-5) ***“Everything that was written in the past was written to teach us. The Scriptures give us patience and encouragement so that we can have hope.”*** (Romans 15:4) (Elwell, n.d. Retrieved April 12, 2012)

For the travelers on the road to Emmaus, hope had been shattered.

**“We had hoped . . . but . . .”**

Hopelessness as an infection of the human spirit is desperately hard to heal.

When you see the suffering or illness of someone you love drag on and on, despair sets in.

You are terrified to hope for recovery, because you might not be able to cope with another disappointment.

Have you ever lost hope?

Were you hoping that God would answer your prayer – and yet, your loved one died?

Were you hoping that life would not be so hard,

 so unfair, and yet hope disintegrated right before your eyes?

Is hope a pipe-dream,

 an impossibility,

 an illusion?

Have your hopes and dreams for an improved ‘today’ been shattered by the decisions of yesterday,

 obscuring the possibilities of a promising ‘tomorrow?’

Has something or someone come between your relationship with God and the hope of the promises you once believed are fragile and tattered?

As the travelers made their weary way to Emmaus, a stranger

**“While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and began walking with them, but they were kept from recognizing him. Then he said, “What are these things you are talking about while you walk?**

**The two followers stopped, looking very sad.”** (Luke 24:15-17)

The men stood still, their faces downcast.

They could barely believe the question – the events of the past couple of days were the talk of the town!

**“The one named Cleopas answered, “Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know what just happened there?”** (Luke 24:18)

Can you imagine the disbelief in their voices?

Can you imagine the compassion in Jesus’ heart?

Oh, he certainly knew what had happened!

He was the One who had personally experienced every second of pain and suffering.

He was the risen Christ!

But he remained unrecognized.

The men summarized the events of the weekend – Jesus of Nazareth:

**“They said, ‘About Jesus of Nazareth. He was a prophet who said and did many powerful things before God and all the people. Our leaders and the leading priests handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. But we were hoping that he would free Israel. Besides this, it is now the third day since this happened. And today some women among us amazed us. Early this morning they went to the tomb, but they did not find his body there. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said that Jesus was alive! So some of our group went to the tomb, too. They found it just as the women said, but they did not see Jesus.”** (Luke 24:19-24)

Disappointment and confusion flooded their hearts as they poured out their story to this man who listened carefully and without interruption.

*"In his infinite courtesy, Jesus remembered the frailty of over-strained nerves and bewildered minds and came, not too suddenly or overwhelming upon them, but in a way which He alone could do, revealed Himself as the Risen Christ."* (Bourgaize, 2000)

There is a lesson there for us.

We may have lost hope ourselves;

 or we may know someone who has lost hope.

These folk were not looking for advice.

They were not looking for platitudes.

They needed companionship.

They needed a listening ear.

They needed ‘someone with skin on’ that will walk with them on their journey of confusion and despair.

They did not need to hear “I know just how you feel.”

They did not need to hear “suck it up, buttercup.”

They did not need to hear “snap out of it.”

They did not need to hear “Get on with it!”

They needed someone to listen to their story,

 without judgment,

 and without interruption.

They needed acceptance and love.

The way that Jesus dealt with this situation is a lesson to each of us.

There will be a time when we are called upon to walk with another who has lost hope.

How will we respond?

Do you know someone who is feels that they are drowning in hopelessness?

Can you listen to their story . . . multiple times . . . if necessary?

Can you listen without judgment?

We are called to be bearers of hope that is wrapped in love,

 compassion,

 and acceptance.

We may not understand their distress;

 we may not understand their choices;

 we may not even agree with their decisions.

But as representatives of hope in Christ, we are commissioned to

**“. . . show his kindness and** [tell of] **the time when our God will punish evil people . . . to comfort all those who are sad”** (Isaiah 61:2)

The travelers on the road to Emmaus that day were able to share their story,

 their doubts,

 their fears,

 their sense of hopelessness . . . and Someone listened.

Someone cared.

1. **Hearts Searching.**

As Cleopas talked, he spoke in the past tense.

**“He *was* a prophet**

 **. . . we *had* hoped**

 **. . . they *did* not see . . .”**

Their experience with Jesus – for them -- was in the past,

 and they thought they were alone.

They had seen him die on the cross.

They had heard that he was alive, but they had not seen him since Friday.

Nothing made sense.

They were drawing on the memories of the past to make sense of the emptiness of the present.

We need only read the Gospels to see what Jesus has done in the past.

You may be able to share what Jesus has done for you in the past.

But what about the present?

What about today?

What has Jesus done for you . . . is doing for you . . . today?

The travelers did not recognize Jesus as he walked along beside them.

Do we recognize Jesus as he walks with us?

Are we sometimes so wrapped up in the distractions of life that we walk downcast and despondent, never lifting our eyes or minds from the dust of our earthly journey?

Are we so consumed by sadness

 or hard work

 or illness

 or tiredness

 or routine

 or demands upon our day that we become oblivious to the strength and glory of his presence within us or around us?

Life leaves us feeling drained

 and empty

 and hopeless.

In situations of despair, there are times when we need another perspective!

A hopeful perspective!

Jesus listened patiently and intently to the hopelessness of his friends that day.

Then it was his turn to speak!

**“You guy just don’t get it!” “How slow of heart you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” “Did the events of the past few days not play out exactly as God had planned?” “Don't you see that these things had to happen, that the Messiah had to suffer and only then enter into His glory?"** (Luke 24:26 The MESSAGE)

**“Then starting with what Moses and all the prophets had said about him, Jesus began to explain everything that had been written about himself in the Scriptures.”** (Luke 24:27)

For the next mile or so, Jesus had a captive audience of two as he revealed himself to them through their own history: The revelation of God through the patriarchs,

 the prophets,

 the promise of Messiah.

And so Jesus told God’s story,

 his Father’s story,

 his own story – the story of the struggle between good and evil,

life and death.

The story of a people who were chosen as the instrument through which God’s only beloved Son, Jesus Christ, would be born,

 live

 and die.

The story of deliverance

 and redemption

 and resurrection.

The story of promise and hope wrapped up in the suffering and death and resurrection of the Son of God,

 Son of Man.

The story of victory over death.

Victory over sin.

A story in which each one of us is invited to be an active participant.

When Jesus interrupts our lives,

 searching our thoughts, we are forced to respond.

How do you respond to Jesus?

Do you welcome him?

Do you allow him to minister to you?

Or do you want to keep on talking,

 telling the story over and over,

 explaining your thoughts and feelings?

Do you keep talking because you are afraid to listen to his voice?

Because you are afraid that what he might reveal will make you uncomfortable if you should allow him to invade the most private areas of your mind and life.

1. **Hearts Burning.**

The final part of this journey must have flown by as the travelers listened to Jesus explain the Scriptures in a way they had never before experienced.

The destination appeared all too quickly, and . . .

**". . . as they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he was going further.”** (Luke 24:28)

He waited for their invitation to come in and stay with them.

God gave us the greatest and the most terrifying gift in the world: the gift of free will.

We can use that gift to invite Christ into our hearts or we can choose to allow him to continue on his way, without us.

In the Book of the Revelation we read this:

**“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."** (Revelation 3:19, 20)

There is a painting of Jesus knocking at a door.

Look closely.

The light around the door is in the shape of a heart – your heart,

 my heart.

There is no handle on the outside of that door.

In order for the door to be opened, you or I have to open it from the inside.

Kind of like the travelers that day.

They were faced with a decision.

Are they going to let Jesus continue on without them,

 or are they going to invite him in to dine with them.

**"But they begged him, “Stay with us, because it is late; it is almost night.”** (Luke 24:29)

. . . and Jesus graciously accepted their invitation.

Here is the rest of the story.

They sat down together to eat.

Jesus took bread and blessed it and gave it to them.

And they saw his hands – not the same hands that broke bread and fed thousands;

 not the same hands that broke bread at the Last Supper – these were nail-pierced hands, and they knew him!

And then he was gone from their midst.

The brokenness of the journey away from Golgotha was replaced with the burning realization that this was – indeed, the risen Christ.

The long journey away from the pain and hurt of Jerusalem was replaced by a return,

 joyful announcement that **“The Lord really has risen from the dead!”** (Luke 24:34)

We have had a personal encounter with the Christ and . . .

“**It felt like a fire burning in us when Jesus talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us.**” (Luke 24:32)

Have you had a ‘heart-burning’ experience with Christ?

Has your life been changed because of that encounter?

Can you say, from the depths of your heart that **“He is risen!”**

Or is your heart still broken because you have yet to meet the risen Christ?

Or maybe you are still searching for the risen Christ.

Just as Jesus joined the two on the road that day, so he will join us on the road we are walking,

 wherever we are,

 whatever we have done or not done.

He will join us – but we must invite him to continue along the road with us.

May you have a ‘heart-burning’ experience.

May your eyes be opened so that you see ‘the Revealed Christ’ – extending nail-pierced hands to receive you into his arms of love,

 redemption,

 peace

 and hope.

May you be able to declare, along with millions of others who have walked the journey before you: “Christ is risen!”

He is alive!

Jesus is the Saviour.

He ***is*** the hope of the World.

Do you have hope today?

Are you looking for hope?

**“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In God’s great mercy he has caused us to be born again into a living hope, because Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Now we hope for the blessings God has for his children. These blessings, which cannot be destroyed or be spoiled or lose their beauty, are kept in heaven for you. God’s power protects you through your faith until salvation is shown to you at the end of time”** (1 Peter 1:3-5)

He is Risen!

He is coming soon!

Are you ready?

AMEN

Let us pray: **Prayer** (Luke 24:13-32, Mark 16:12-13) (from [*Resources for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and throughout the year (2010),*](http://www.oikoumene.org/fileadmin/files/wcc-main/documents/p2/2009/WOP2010eng.pdf)jointly prepared and published by *The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity* and *The Commission on Faith and Order of the World Council of Churches.*Posted on the [**World Council of Churches**](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/home.html)website)

**O risen Christ,**

**On the road to Emmaus you were the disciples’ companion.**

**Be at our side on the journey of faith on life’s pathways and at every encounter,**

**engender our compassion, so that we may welcome others and listen to their stories.**

**Kindle anew the desire to proclaim your Word.**

**May it illumine us and may our hearts burn to bear witness to it.**

**May your Holy Spirit teach us the art of explaining scripture and open our eyes to recognize you.**

**Grant us the courage to become vulnerable so that our sisters and brothers may know you through us and that we may know you through them.**

**AMEN**

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