

Jesus Helps When We Are Confused

Luke 24:13-35

As I have listened to the news lately there seems to be a great deal of confusion in our world. For example, it would be nice to know just who is in control of the situation in Ukraine. Since it is in the news continually, it would also be helpful to know the details of the Malaysian flight that has been missing for some time. Of course, in our own country there are often confusing messages concerning the economy, health care and a host of other topics. There just don't seem to be any clear answers to the issues or the events. Confusion sometimes appears to rule the day.

Confusion doesn't only occur on the national level. It also occurs on the individual level. When it does, it can be very debilitating. When some people become confused they simply shut down. They don't know what to do about a problem so they don't do anything at all. They just sit and ignore the world around them. Other individuals become apathetic. The feeling is that they have no way to understand the problem so they act as if the issue or the problem simply doesn't exist. Still other people become angry. They want to know why someone isn't out there trying to solve the problem. Of course, they believe it has to be solved in a way that makes sense to them. Finally, there are those who believe they already know the answers. They claim they aren't confused at all. Yet, when they enter a discussion about the issue and they are asked how to resolve it, they eventually respond with "I don't know."

The only healthy response to confusion seems to be asking others to help us understand. In some cases, that might mean talking a problem over with a friend. With others, it might mean talking to a counselor. In all situations it is helpful to invite God to help us. If there is any Biblical event that helps us see how God can work in our lives directly it is the story of the walk to Emmaus.

In this story we are introduced to two men who have been in Jerusalem for the Passover. They are traveling from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a distance of seven miles. As they are walking they are discussing the events that have occurred over the past week. They are very confused because of the conversation they have with a stranger who suddenly appears with them.

We are informed that the stranger is Jesus. Somehow they do not recognize him even though they knew him. Jesus asks them what it is that they are discussing. Incredulously they look at this man and ask him how he could not have heard of the events in Jerusalem. When the stranger asks them what things they reply the things about Jesus of Nazareth. At this point they unload the entire story of the events of the last week of Jesus' life. They tell him about the arrest and the trial. They share that he was sentenced to death and crucified. What is more they tell the man that it is now the third day since the crucifixion. Some of their company went to the tomb and found it empty. These persons claim to have seen angels who said Jesus was alive. Still other companions went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described. Unlike the women, they did not see Jesus. They also shared one other important point. They had hoped that Jesus was the Messiah. They had hoped he was the one

who was to come and redeem Israel. Now, they are very confused and they do not understand the meaning of all of these events.

What is interesting is that they have been talking among themselves. They are both confused about the same thing. They are seeking for answers but they are looking in the wrong place. Let me give you an example. A man was walking along one day and the ground gave way underneath him. Suddenly he finds himself in a deep hole. He is unhurt, but he is stuck. A short while later another man comes along. The man in the hole yells out for help. The other man comes to the side of the hole and peers in. He sees the predicament of the other man. The man in the hole cries out for help. The man looking down yells to him, "Wait and I will get some help." The man in the hole says, NO? Come down and help me out." The man climbs down the side sliding most of the way because the sides were steep. When he gets to the bottom he realizes the sides are too high for either of them to get out. Now you have two people stuck in the hole. The point is when two people are confused about the same issue they often can't see the way out of the confusion. Someone on the outside looking in has a better opportunity to help them break through the confusion. Jesus is about to help these two men in their confusion.

After he listens to their story Jesus begins to teach them. We are told that he explains to them how everything that occurred with Jesus was absolutely found in the scriptures. The explanation began with Moses and then all of the Prophets of Israel. As Jesus explains the scriptures their hearts and minds become open and they begin to understand. They still do not know it is Jesus with them. They will not know it is him until he breaks bread with them at the evening meal. When he disappears from them they suddenly realize that it was Jesus. They also realize how they had changed as Jesus spoke to them. They realized how much they now understood the scriptures. They now understood why the events in Jerusalem occurred. A deeper understanding replaced their confusion. With this deeper understanding, they found encouragement and hope. With renewed hope they left the table and hurried through the night back to Jerusalem to share the Good News with the disciples.

The funny thing is that we believe that God know all things, past, present and future. We also believe that Jesus is our help and salvation. Finally, we believe that the Holy Spirit of God is with us to help us remember the teachings of Jesus and understand them. And yet, how often do we ask God to help us when we are confused? Jesus hasn't gone away from us. In fact, like the two men on the road to Emmaus, Jesus has promised to be with us. Too often we depend on our own devices to resolve our confusion. Too often we ask others to join us in the hold. We allow ourselves to become so drawn in to the problems of the world that we lose hope.

Thankfully we have a God who is always present. No matter where we go or what we are doing Jesus is there. When we are confused, Jesus tells us to seek him and to come to him. He will supply what we need to understand and to renew our hope. In the Rite I service there is a section called the comfortable words right after the absolution. The very first phrase is the 28th verse of chapter 11 in the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you

rest.” The promise is there. When we are wearied and confused by the changes and chances of the world in which we live we can always depend on Jesus our Lord. The ways of the world will always confuse us. The way of God will always lead us to eternal hope through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.