

## *To God Alone Be The Glory*

What gives it to you? Spaghetti? Pepperoni pizza? Vegetables? Dairy products? What gives you heartburn? If you've ever had the burning sensation of indigestion, you can understand why Pepcid AC, R-O-L-A-I-D-S, and 🎵Tum-Tum-Tum- Tum-Tums are still top sellers. Heartburn may not be as bad as a root canal, but I still wouldn't wish it on my enemy. And yet today's Gospel leads us to approach our Lord and say, **WE WANT A GOOD CASE OF RESURRECTION HEARTBURN.**

You heard the Gospel for today. Let's imagine ourselves into the story. It's the first Easter Sunday. Judas died on Friday, and there are just eleven apostles left. While the Eleven remain in Jerusalem, two other disciples of Jesus leave for Emmaus, a seven-mile hike. And what an animated conversation they're having! Can you see them gesturing broadly? Like two detectives, they are wrestling with the evidence from their long weekend. Let's listen: "Okay, we know he died. But why did the sun stop shining for three hours on Friday?" "Yes, and did you hear that the curtain in the temple ripped in two from top to bottom? It has to be a miracle; that's a heavy curtain!" "What do you think happened to the body? The Eleven all say none of them took it, like the soldiers claim." "Speaking of claims, what do you make of our sisters

saying some angels told them he's alive?" "I don't know. Do you think they're just in denial?" "I don't know either, but this sure is frustrating! If only we could figure it out! What does it all mean?" Like bumper cars, their minds ricochet from one piece of evidence to the next. But they're making neither heads nor tails out of it.

As they zip along the Emmaus parkway at the blistering speed of two miles an hour, a stranger comes down the on-ramp and merges smoothly into traffic. (It's really Jesus, but he uses his power to keep them from recognizing him; Mark's Gospel tells us he appeared to them in a different form.) After listening politely for a bit, the stranger asks, "Wha-cha talkin' about, guys?" They stop. You see their sad eyes, the corners of their mouths bent down, foreheads furrowed. Each word bears a bitter weariness: "Don't you keep up with the news? How could you not know the things that have been happening?" <sup>19</sup>*"What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning*

*23but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see."*

Have you ever heard sadder words? "We hoped he was the one who was going to redeem Israel." They had watched on Friday. They had waited yesterday. Peter and John investigated the empty tomb this morning. It was no use sticking around in Jerusalem any longer. The Jesus movement was dead, as was he, and the Romans were still in charge of their homeland. And Israel had come **so close** to being redeemed, paid for with a ransom, so that it could be a great and glorious nation again. "We had hoped, but now we are hopeless and in despair."

When do people get scolded the most severely? Isn't it when they know better? *25He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*

Wouldn't you just love to know which Old Testament passages Jesus referred

to? The Holy Spirit thought it best for us not to know the specifics. But when we read the Old Testament and wrestle with God's Word, we find Jesus in so many passages. And we find something important for our daily life in nearly every chapter of the Old Testament. I suspect Jesus took the two disciples into Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 and Psalm 16 so they could hear the prophecies of his suffering and death as payment for all sin, and of his resurrection vividly set forth. God's grace had planned our salvation, and nothing was going to stop Jesus from fulfilling every Bible verse! The Christ had to suffer these things and enter his glory because God wants everyone to be saved. He wants heaven filled to the rafters with those he loves and who love him!

*28As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. Has it ever bothered you that Jesus appears to be deceiving the disciples in this verse? Our translation says, **He acted as if he were going farther**, but only because it was true. Jesus actually did have other places to go that night: the Eleven and the others who had gathered behind locked doors for fear of the Jews were slated for a visit. Here's what happened: sometime after 4 o'clock the two disciples turned off the main drag at Emmaus: "Here's our stop." Jesus*

probably said, “Goodbye. Nice meeting you,” and kept walking. “Hey, hey, hey, where you going?” “Down the road a piece.” “Oh, no, we can’t let you do that. That was the most interesting Bible Class we’ve ever attended. We want to spend more time with you and learn more from the Bible. Besides the sun’s goin’ down. How much farther can you get in the dark? You don’t want to spend the night outside. Are you hungry? We’ve got plenty of bread. Come on. You’ve just **got** to stay with us!” And they persuaded him.

When they finished washing up, it was time for dinner. And their guest did an unusual thing at the dinner table. He acted like the host. First, before picking up a utensil, before anyone stuffed a bite into his mouth, Jesus gave thanks to God for what they were about to eat. \*Do you do that? Do you pray before your meals? And not just the “Come Lord Jesus” prayer all the time (unless you have small children who need that sameness). It’s a good prayer, but do you know how many Lutherans have mistakenly concluded from this prayer that we have to ble~~s~~s our food before we eat it? Listen to the words carefully and you’ll realize we’re actually asking the Lord to bless us through the food. But I digress. Praying before you eat is good no

matter what prayer you use. Jesus **thanked** God for the bread **before** he ate it. We can do the same. If you’re going to use only the “Come Lord Jesus” and the “O give thanks” prayers, I suggest you give thanks before the meal, and save “Come Lord Jesus” till after the meal. Then it will mean: “Come and bless us through the food we are now digesting.” \*By the way, you can create your own meal prayers. And by the way, you can have a copy of these 24 other meal prayers.

As soon as Jesus prays, now is the right time! Jesus opens their eyes to his real personage, probably by assuming his familiar form again. Did the two disciples see the nail marks in his hands as he was handing them each a piece of bread? Perhaps. However he revealed himself, Jesus didn’t stick around long.

Some folks think that when Jesus broke the bread, he was giving these two disciples communion. But then why did he disappear before distributing the cup? This was just supper, not Lord’s Supper.

Do you wonder why Jesus left so quickly? If he stayed, maybe they would have been embarrassed about not recognizing him sooner, or maybe they would have asked unimportant questions such as, “Where have you

been since you rose this morning?” and “What does it feel like to be alive again?” Don’t you just love what they say instead? *32They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”* They now realized they had a wonderful case of resurrection heartburn.

So what do they do next? *33They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem.* They don’t stop to finish supper. They don’t make excuses about having just walked seven miles from Jerusalem. They don’t say, “We’ll go back first thing in the morning.” They have good news! Good news wants to be shared! Their feet can’t remember how weary they were a few minutes ago, and now their feet barely touch the ground as they carry these two disciples back to Jerusalem. Do you see what a good case of resurrection heartburn can make you do? We want some of that here at St. John’s. The prophet Jeremiah talks about it 500 years before the resurrection: *[God’s] Word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. ... I cannot [hold it in]* (Jeremiah 20:9).

Friends, didn’t we gather around God’s Word today because WE WANT A GOOD CASE OF RESURRECTION HEARTBURN TOO? But how are we ever going to get as genuinely

excited about the risen Savior as these two were? “That’s not a fair question, Pastor. They got to see Jesus alive. All we have is the Bible.” Wait a minute! ‘All we have is the Bible’?!? Isn’t the Bible what Jesus made use of to change their hearts and give them back their hope? Didn’t the two disciples get their case of resurrection heartburn from hearing and learning God’s Word all afternoon? We are not at a disadvantage. This passage demonstrates what I’ve often said: Sunday really wants to be a two-hour experience for us (worship and Bible study). Actually we need to spend time in the Bible daily. And then God will give us what we’re asking him for today: a good case of resurrection heartburn. People who have daily devotions find the Lord orchestrating their lives in such a way that, just when they need a certain Bible passage to prove a point or comfort a troubled soul or lift up a friend, that very verse or thought was part of their devotions that morning. And the resurrection heartburn moves them to speak up. And Jesus’ kingdom spreads. And more people come to faith or are strengthened in the faith. And God is glorified. WE WANT A GOOD CASE OF RESURRECTION HEARTBURN TOO. And through God’s Word, he’s going to give it to us.