



Sermon: April 11, 2021

Scripture Reading: Luke 24.13-35

The Message:

“You do remember -- we have met?”

[Video Version](#)



**The Rev. Dr.
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Here I am back at home for safety's sake as we hunker down once more to shake the latest variants. This month I have been remembering funny incidents in my ministry. More of those in the weeks to come, but one spoke to me particularly today.

Almost a decade ago, I drove two friends to Paris Ontario to spend the afternoon with our church's then Moderator, the Very Reverend Peter Short.

Because of the growing recognition of the pressures many of us live with, Peter was offering ministers retreat days as he has traveled to each Conference during his term.

I looked forward to the day – I thought Peter was a stellar Moderator: a great teacher and prophet; but I also had my usual dread of getting together with my colleagues in Hamilton Conference.

Why?

- Because I was one of only three ordained in my year so everyone my generation seemed to know me but I didn't know them;
- because I taught people to be ministers in two theological colleges so had graduates spread across the country, whose names I might not remember
- because I was the theme speaker for Hamilton conference a number of years before I worked in the conference, so again, everyone seemed to know my name, but I knew few names and had forgotten more.

This event was no different. Even before lunch I had been greeted by three people who called me by name and I drew a blank.

During lunch, I was sitting with good friends when my chair was jostled by two men lining up. I turned around and one greeted me warmly – I never did figure out who he was.

Then the other one shook my hand. “Morar,” he said. “I just finished reading an article you wrote – it was wonderful!”

Silence while I try to figure out who this is and what I have written lately.

“You do remember we *have* met?” he asked.

“Yes,” I say, “the face is familiar, but my addled brain is searching for a name.”

“Peter Short.”

- We went to McGill together for a year -- he was ahead of me, but still.
- I had seen his picture every month in our national magazine, and
- **I was there to see him.** So embarrassing.

My friends, sitting at the table right there had the best laugh of the day – and all used this story to begin their sermons that week.

Why am I using it, you ask? Because I am just like those dumb disciples on the road to Emmaus. The very person I was wanting to see; whom I had already met and known – was like a stranger to me.

The disciples don't come off much better.

And this is one of the reasons why:

They are so reluctant to be transformed by the resurrection, that they keep their social plans to go to Emmaus for dinner.

It doesn't get any better for them. They meet Jesus on the road and they don't even recognize him. How stupid is that? Can't even recognize their leader, teacher, prophet – even when he does what he has done so many times before – interprets the scriptures to them.

All they had to do was to accept the fact that Jesus wanted to walk with them. But they couldn't recognize him, just like I couldn't recognize the Moderator who knew me by name.

What happened on that road?

- An apparent stranger accompanied them along the way;
- When they finally recognized him, he turned out to be the risen Christ.

Jesus transformed these two disheartened people into "burning hearts."

Burning hearts are hearts ablaze with the good news of the gospel. They energize people to witness to the hope of the resurrection in Jesus Christ. Burning hearts pump new life into people so they can give their lives away for others.

The disciples' burning hearts turned their hopelessness into hopefulness.

Their sadness into joy.

Their grief and confusion into explosive excitement and sheer determination to share their experience with the other disciples in Jerusalem.

Their witness contributed to the development of the revolutionary movement started by Jesus and later called Christianity.

Nevertheless, what is unique in this story is the way Jesus ministers to the two and prepares them for their task ahead:

Jesus leads them from the known to the unknown. He accompanies them, listens to them and gently guides them through the Scriptures so they can understand the current events in light of the past and God's projected future.

Jesus employs the usual to reveal the unusual. But the stranger remained a stranger until dinnertime.

Their first clue was the way he took bread and blessed it.
And then the way he took the cup and gave thanks for it was more than enough.

They looked at each other speechless, yet with the only question that mattered then:
Can it be? Could it be Jesus?
Their minds had been opened with the Word —
and now they were able to recognize him in a meal that transformed their weak hearts
into burning hearts.

What a gift these two disciples received on that road to Emmaus. It's a gift still available
for you and me.

Even as we struggle with questions, we know that Jesus is at our side, walking with us.

He may not give us all the answers. In fact, he may add more questions. But we can live
with the assurance that God is with us.

Jesus wants to be your companion on the road you travel. He has people to bless, lives
to touch, hearts to transform. He calls you. He invites you to be part of his revolutionary
movement to transform the world into burning hearts for God. Jesus wants you to be a
disciple, ready to follow and willing to lead others to a relationship with God.

"Why me," you say?

Well, Jesus isn't looking for super-men or wonder-women. He surely wouldn't have
chosen me if he were.

He is looking for ordinary people, open-hearted women and men to receive God's gifts
of grace, forgiveness and love — and then pass them on to others.

The way of discipleship may be strange to you, but not for long. Christ will open your
mind to understand his word. The word will be a light to your path, and his holy meal will
sustain you on your journey.

Ordinary people, like you and me and like the two on the road to Emmaus, can be
empowered by God to do extraordinary things. We can be empowered to have "burning
hearts" as we accompany each other on the road of life.

Wherever your Emmaus might be, in your home, your place of work, your school, where
you play, the blessed assurance that we all can have is that he will come and walk with
us. No one has been able to identify just where Emmaus was located. That very fact
opens the possibilities for us of an Emmaus experience wherever we are. You see, it's
not a place; it's an often stumbling encounter with the risen Christ who asks, "You do
remember, we **have** met?" It's an encounter in which God sets our hearts on fire!