

“Do You Have This Kind of Easter Heartburn?”

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Our Savior’s Way Lutheran Church

Pastor Tyson Labuhn

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

During this Easter season, we’re continuing our celebration of the joy that is ours because of Christ’s resurrection. For Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

Last week, we heard John’s account of how Jesus revealed Himself to Thomas so that he might believe that Jesus had physically risen from the dead. Jesus went on to say, “blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:29b) And in our Gospel reading for today, found in Luke’s Gospel, we hear about the time when Jesus spoke to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. As He did, their hearts were burning within them.

Then again, that was a long time ago and not too many people talk about their heartburn. And maybe I shouldn’t be surprised today with all kinds of medicines readily available to us that even stop heartburn even before it begins. Then again, there was a time when

more people experienced heartburn even before Christ. And did you know that the prophet Jeremiah even wrote about his heartburn. In Jeremiah 20:9, “But if I say I’ll never mention the Lord or speak in his name, his word burns in my heart like a fire. It’s like a fire in my bones! I am worn out trying to hold it in! I can’t do it! (NLT) Even though that first Easter hadn’t yet been celebrated yet, Jeremiah couldn’t stop sharing God’s Word... Do you have this kind of Easter heartburn today?

On that first Easter Sunday, while some of the disciples were in the upper room, others had already left to go back home. It was on that same day when two of them were walking 7 miles to a village called Emmaus. They were talking about what they knew had happened. They were talking about how Jesus had been crucified, about his death, and his burial. And of course, the empty tomb. But as they were walking Jesus Himself came up and started to walk with them. “...He said to them, ‘What is this conversation that you are holding with each other as you walk?’” (v.17)... And here’s where we start to see their heartburn...

They stood still, looking sad because the law of God had scorched their hearts. They knew that the prophet Ezekiel once wrote that the soul who sins must die. (Ezekiel 18:20) But one of them, named Cleopas,

answered saying, “Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who doesn’t know the things that have happened in these days?” (v.18) And because the law of God was still weighing heavy on their hearts, they didn’t recognize that it was Jesus Himself who was asking. So Jesus asks, “What things?” (v.19a) And because the law of God was taking away the Easter joy from them, they answered, ‘...[the] chief priests and the rulers delivered [Jesus] up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that He was the one to redeem Israel.’ (v.20)

They went on to say, “Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and when they didn’t find his body, they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb found it just as the women had said, but him, they did not see.”(v.22-24) It was this heartburn of their hearts coming from the Law of God that prevented them from seeing the joy of the Gospel. This is what the Law of God does. It reminds us of our sinfulness, and it condemns us. It simply cannot save us.

But Jesus comes and tells them the truth. He says to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all

that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into His glory?” (v.26) Then He went on to change their sadness into joy, “beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures concerning Himself.” (v.27) Jesus had to remind them what was spoken by the prophets concerning the Word of God, helping them to see that a Savior would come. And how the Savior needed to die on the cross for the sins of the whole world.

While the two disciples already knew what He was sharing with them, when Jesus was explaining it to them again, their hearts began to warm up to the Gospel message once again. And as they drew near to the village, Jesus acted as if He might be traveling on. But they wanted Him to stay with them, so they said to Him, “Stay with us, for it is toward evening and the day is now far spent.” (v. 29a) And while they did so under the guise of Christian care, they wanted to hear more from Jesus.

He shared with them even more, because when He was at table with them, He took the bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them. The words were familiar. Because they were the words spoken by Jesus on the night that He was betrayed. And “their eyes were

opened, and they recognized Him. And He vanished from their sight.” (v. 31) Jesus had many other things to do, but the disciples said to one another, “Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked to us on the road, while He opened to us the Scriptures?”

Now, they had already walked 7 miles, and the day was spent. But their hearts were burning so brightly, that they decided to go back to Jerusalem. And even though many people didn't walk at night, they went anyways, and found the 11 disciples, as well as those who were gathered with them. And said, “The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!” (v.34) And they went on to share what had happened on their way, and how they recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread...

Isn't this what happens to us as well? God's law comes in and condemns us because of our sins. It tells us that we don't deserve one single blessing. And then, our loving Savior comes along side us, and reminds us of the love that He has for us. How He fulfilled the Law perfectly for us - by dying on the cross, - that we might be forgiven. How He rose again on the third day, - that we might have new life in Him.... This is what warms our hearts and changes our lives, like it did in the lives

of those two disciples who walked with Him to Emmaus...

And yet today, we live in a world that wonders, what's going to happen in the future. News reports seem to be fueled by fear, anxiety and despair. God's law and gospel is often misunderstood and misapplied. Because some try to cauterize the gospel so that it might be turned into law. While others try to do the same with the law, in order that it might be turned into the gospel. It's no wonder that many are confused and continue to have doubts about the Good News that Jesus came to bring them. And yet, when the law and gospel is applied rightly and has done it's job, the law condemns and puts to death the sin that lives within our hearts, making room for the gospel to burn brightly in our hearts once again. Do you have this kind of Easter heartburn?

When we follow the example of our Lord Jesus who selflessly gave Himself for us, no longer are we self-centered, but instead we become Christ-centered, selflessly giving and sharing the Easter joy that burns within our hearts. And even though our hearts have been singed and scorched by God's law, our Lord Jesus comes along side us and warms our hearts once again. He sets our lives ablaze with His gospel message, that we might rightly share His Good News with those

around us. That they too might experience His love, and share in the joy of His resurrection, both now and always. For Christ is Risen! He is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!

In Jesus Name, Amen.