

**This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Amen.**

<sup>13</sup> Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. <sup>15</sup> As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; <sup>16</sup> but they were kept from recognizing him. <sup>17</sup> He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast. <sup>18</sup> One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?” <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. <sup>20</sup> The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup> but 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. <sup>22</sup> In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning <sup>23</sup> but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”

<sup>25</sup> He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

<sup>28</sup> As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther. <sup>29</sup> But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them.

<sup>30</sup> When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. <sup>31</sup> Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. <sup>32</sup> They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”

<sup>33</sup> They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together <sup>34</sup> and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” <sup>35</sup> Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread. **This is the Gospel of our Lord.**

**Dear Disciples of Christ,**

As I studied this portion of scripture this week, I tried to summarize it in my mind to sort of get a feel for what was going on in the lives of these two disciples. Here’s my summary: **“Life is good. Life is bad. Life is good again.”** As I thought about that summary it fits well with what is going on in our world today. As we consider the events on the Road to Emmaus may it help us to see how, **“Life was good and now Life seems bad but as we look forward, life will be good again.”**

**I.** I would guess these disciples were there as Jesus rode into Jerusalem and might even have been part of the crowd shouting Hosannas to the Lord. Life was good. They might have been hoping that Jesus would establish his kingdom on this earth and free them from the Roman rule. Things seem to be going well as the week progressed. Jesus cleared the money changers and

vendors out of the temple and then spent time telling parables and teaching. This was the life they had wanted and they set aside their fears that Jesus would somehow be put to death by his enemies. Life was good.

But then Thursday rolled around and life still seemed to be going well. I don't know if these 2 disciples were there to celebrate the Passover with Jesus or if they went out to the Garden of Gethsemane, but I am sure the word got out early Friday that Jesus had been arrested and by 9:00 AM Friday Jesus was being nailed to the cross for his crucifixion. Life was good and now, all of a sudden, life was bad.

Did they watch the crucifixion from a distance? We don't know but I am sure they felt the earthquake when Jesus died and heard about the temple curtain tearing in two. I am sure that the word got out to Jesus' followers that he had died and had been buried and they all mourned his death. Their hopes for the redemption of Israel had been crushed. What now? Would they be arrested too because they had followed Jesus? They had a lot of questions – a lot of uncertainties and a lot of disappointments.

They decided to head for Emmaus. We think that maybe that was their hometown. As they were walking, the risen Savior, Jesus, caught up with them but they didn't recognize him. He asked them a question that seemed to get to the heart of what was on their minds. Luke tells us, **“They stood still, their faces downcast.”** They described Jesus as, **“a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. <sup>20</sup> The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; <sup>21</sup> but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel.”** There it was. They had hoped he would redeem Israel but did they even understand what that meant? And even more disheartening was the fact that their leaders had handed him over to be crucified. No wonder they were disappointed.

But there was a glimmer of hope. Some of our women, **“came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. <sup>24</sup> Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but him they did not see.”** They had called the women crazy but the tomb was empty, however someone could have stolen the body. They just did not know what to think.

Then Jesus said, **“How slow of heart [you are] to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” <sup>27</sup> And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”**

Jesus took them to the scriptures to bring clarity to the last few days. He doesn't give us a list of scripture he used but he might have gone to the Book of Isaiah where in chapter 53 Isaiah describes how Jesus would be pierced for our transgressions and crushed for our iniquities and how his punishment would bring us peace with his heavenly Father.

Since they had just celebrated the Passover he might have pointed to God's rescue of his people – how it was the blood of the lamb that saved them from death and now the blood of the Lamb of God – Jesus – would take away the sins of the world. And of course, Jesus could have

talked about his own prophecies about how it was necessary for him to go to Jerusalem and suffer and die but he would rise 3 days later. Then it was time to stop for the night and Jesus revealed himself in person to these two disciples. Life was good again.

They couldn't contain their joy and excitement and rushed back to Jerusalem to share the news. They had seen Jesus in person! Life was good again.

**II.** You might be wondering, "How does this apply to me?" Well, as we started the year in January, I would guess that for most of us, "**Life was good.**" I know it was for Dawn and for me. The economy was good, people had jobs, the store shelves had everything we needed and it seemed like 2020 was going to be a pretty good year. If anything, maybe we were too busy and had too many things fighting for our time.

But then the coronavirus came. It started out slow, people didn't think it would affect us, but in just a short time things changed. Suddenly we had to stay home, store shelves emptied and seemed to stay empty, and many lost their jobs and had to file for unemployment which was a challenge in itself. Almost overnight we went from "**Life is Good.**" to "**Life is Bad.**"

Just as Jesus took those two disciples to the scriptures to help them understand Jesus and what he has done for us, I hope that maybe during the last 4 weeks you have been spending a little bit more time in the scriptures. I know I need to hear those words from Isaiah describing our suffering Savior and the peace he brings to us because of the cross. When I hear about the punishment he bore that brought us peace, I can't help but thank God for the love of his Son who took my place so that he could pay for my sins and redeem me.

I look to the Psalms that constantly reassure me that God is my refuge and strength because as I deal with staying at home and other issues, I need to know that I can draw strength from God and his Word. If I am feeling isolated and alone God assures me that I am never alone and that he is always with me.

The Apostle Paul said, "**That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.**" (2 Corinthians 12:10). Paul understood that when he was enduring weaknesses and suffering, then he was strong because he was depending on God's strength rather than his own, and so now as we might be caught up in thinking "**Life is not good,**" remember that God is strong and his strength will get you through this time in your life. And don't forget that with God's encouragement and with God at our side, "**Life will be Good Again.**"

If you want an exercise for this week for yourself and/or for your children, pick a book of the Bible or a chapter and find out how many times it talks about Jesus and what it tells us about him. If you want suggestions, Isaiah chapter 53 or the book of 1 John or some of the chapters in Hebrews or Micah chapter 5 and there are many more. This takes you to the scriptures and as we dig into the scriptures the Holy Spirit works to strengthen our faith and to help us through life.

We know this pandemic has affected all of us but it will only last for a while and God is always with us to help us through our troubles and to be our comfort and strength. Today,

remember the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. For them, Life was good, life was bad and then life was good again. What made the difference was that they had God's Word and they had Jesus in their lives. We have the same and even more than what they had, we have the whole story which shows us Jesus and his great love for us – we understand the need for the cross and his suffering and death. We understand the resurrection and how it assures us of forgiveness, life and salvation. Life was good and now it seems that Life is Bad but with God in our hearts and in our lives Life is Good again. Amen.