

Scripture: Luke 24:13-35

Sermon Title: "Moved by a Memory"

Rev. Josh Fitterling

Have you ever been moved by a memory? Have you ever, in a moment of your life, recalled something from the past, and through it, found your life in the present changed, even if only for a moment? Now generally, when we think of a memory, we tend to think about things that have happened in our lives, right? Things that we have experienced or witnessed. However, these are not the only memories that have the ability to affect our lives – the memories that are held by others and shared with us – these too can change us. When someone invites you into their life and shares with you part of their story, these memories can be just as powerful as the one's that our lives helped to create. And then you have the memories of history, which are passed down from generation to generation, whether spoken or written that too can impact our lives. For even the memories of things that we have not experienced, they too can move us.

And so, there are many memories out there that we may find ourselves recalling. And generally, when we recall a memory, it is triggered by something going on in our lives, in our world; some sort of stimuli around us. And there are so many things that we can encounter in our lives that lead us to remember something. It may be a sight, sound, smell. It may be a situation in which we find ourselves. It may be a place, it may be an action. It really could be a lot of things. And the change that it has in our lives when we recall a memory, even if for only a moment, may be a smile brought to our face, or a sorrow that fills our heart. It may lead us to question something or wonder about something going on in our lives. It may guide our next steps on our journey, wherever that journey may lead.

Today in our scripture reading from the Gospel of Luke, we hear of two followers of Jesus who were on their way to Emmaus and about to be moved by a memory – a memory of a moment that they themselves did not witness in the flesh, but one that was and forever is powerfully important. Now, these two whom we encounter today were

not among the 12 disciples that we are accustomed to hearing mention of – or the 12 apostles as Luke referred to them. Rather, these two, Cleopas and the unnamed traveling companion, were likely followers who perhaps heard the teachings of Jesus and maybe saw some miracles or signs, and they came to believe and they came to follow and to be disciples as we ourselves are called to be disciples. And so, we encounter them on this road as they were now wondering about what had happened that very morning, keeping in mind that these events were taking place on the same day as the resurrection. They had been told by the women at the tomb that Jesus had risen and they had been told by other disciples that the tomb was indeed empty but no sighting of Jesus was found. They were clearly struggling with comprehending what had happened. They were said to be sad – not the posture of believing your Redeemer lives but more a posture of not being sure what to believe. However their posture, their sense of understanding, they were all about to change. And what would cause the change – the spark of a memory.

As Jesus, who had walked with these two on their journey, who spoke many profound things to them, and who was not recognized, sat down with these two for dinner he did something that sounds so familiar to a meal he not long ago shared with the twelve apostles. “He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them”. Sound familiar? Sounds like the institution of the Lord’s Supper – of Holy Communion, doesn’t it? And while these two were not in that upper room for the Passover meal, for again they were not among the 12, it sparked a memory of the collective mind of the followers of Christ – a memory that is not held in only those who experienced it first but a memory so powerful that it stands the test of time and touches even us as it is passed down. For you see, the memory of that Passover meal and the ability to re-member it, to put it back together and to bring that moment back to life, this ability lives within us all as well – for it is a memory of the Christian faith. And so, when these two followers of Jesus had that memory brought to life right before their very eyes, and they were able to see the truth of who was with them, they were moved – they were moved from sorrow of death

to the joy of resurrection and they were moved physically to go, share, tell, and do. For in that moment, that memory helped reveal the glories of Easter – the glories of Christ’s Resurrection. And now, they could live as disciples of the Risen One!

And so, when we gather to partake of this simple and sacred meal, as we will do in just a few moments, we come, not only to remember this story – not only to recall this memory, but we come to be moved by it. How will this memory move you today? How will the act of remembering this meal move you to go out into the world? What new memories will this meal move you to create with your family, your friends, with people whom you have never met until today – what memories will you be moved to create that, for years to come, will have the ability to bring joy when they are recalled? What memories will you be moved to create, that will have the ability to bring healing when they are recalled? What memories will you be moved to create, that will have the ability to propel people - to move people into lives that reflect more and more the glories of God? And so, as we recall the memory of this sacred feast, we are reminded of the power that a memory can indeed hold and we are reminded of the wonderful gift that a memory can indeed be. So, as you go about your life this week, create memories wisely and when you recall them, be moved for the better. Amen.