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**The Adrenalin Rush of Jesus**

**April 30, 2017**

**Luke 24:13-35**

Grace and peace to you from God Our Father and from the Risen Lord who reveals himself in the breaking of the bread, amen.

My bucket list contains one or two pretty adventurous items. I want to snorkel the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Australia and I want to go on the largest Zip Line in the Rain Forrest of Costa Rica. For me, even just thinking about these two adventures sends a rush of adrenalin coursing through my veins and I get giddy.

Researchers tell us that younger generations are drawn more than ever to adrenaline. Quite a few years ago when Trevor was still in Boy Scouts we took a camping trip to West Virginia where we did white water rafting down the great Salt River. It was quite evident the researchers were correct because from what I saw it was vividly clear most of the guides and participants were under 30. Me and the other Boy Scout leaders were the oldest people on the river that day. I remember asking our guide how old the oldest person to successfully navigate the treacherous waters of the Salt River was and he told me they once had a person in their upper 80s complete the trip. I guess there are some adrenaline junkies in every generation.

Have you looked in the coolers at a gas station lately? There are as many energy products like Red Bull and Monster as there are caffeinated sodas. Movies are rated based on their thrills. And Extreme Sports like American Ninja Warrior have more to do with producing an adrenalin rush than they do with any type of conventional warrior skills I ever learned in my 20 years in the Air Force… In today’s world, if your heart isn’t racing, something’s wrong.

You wouldn’t know it from all of that hype, but real life has moments of “down time.” Even with the excitement of Easter still fresh in our minds, gospel writer Luke invites us to travel with two disciples in their down time.

To us, it was Easter. To these disciples, it was a day of fear and grief. Their teacher had been executed. They were scared for their own lives. They had heard reports that there was no body in the tomb, but resurrection was the furthest thing from their minds. Walking away from Jerusalem was good for their safety as well as their psyches. And while they didn’t expect this seven-mile walk to get their hearts racing, they did think it would be good for their souls. They would talk as they walked, and try to make sense of it all.

Just then a stranger approaches. We know it’s Jesus, but Luke makes it clear to us “their eyes were kept from recognizing him.” They summarize the events of Holy Week for him, still trying to grasp it all themselves. And he surprised them by responding, “Oh, how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe…”

Ouch! That hurt, but it was true. They thought Jesus was the slow one, but Jesus turned it around on them… These two disciples couldn’t and we also can’t explain the divine using only human concepts. Mere words are never adequate. Mystery is always part of the equation because God is far more complex than we can understand. They were aiming at royalty (rather than divinity) and came up short.

And so, as he had done in the past, Jesus taught them about how historical events – the ones before their time as well as the ones they had experienced – fit together like a puzzle that would change the world for all time.

Now THAT got their hearts racing! They didn’t want Jesus to stop talking. They invited him to stay with them. At that point, they still didn’t know he was Jesus, but their eyes and ears and minds and hearts were hungry for more.

It is no small thing that Christ’s identity was finally revealed to these two disciples in the breaking of the bread. Throughout the Gospels people don’t recognize who Jesus is by the supernatural miracles he performs. They don’t get that he’s the Son of God by reading and studying the scriptures. People can’t fathom Jesus Christ in His Majesty and Glory even when he’s standing right in front of them, walking with them, talking with them, and explaining everything about himself directly and plainly to them. They recognize Jesus as the risen Lord only and finally in the breaking of the bread. Communion gave the disciples a palpable experience of Christ. His words had stirred them, but sharing a meal opened their eyes. Two thousand years later, if we asked people what part of worship makes them feel closest to Christ, many will say it’s Communion because we hear the words, “for you” as we touch and taste the bread and wine. That’s the biggest reason why most Lutheran Churches have already moved to offer Communion at every worship experience…

As Luke tells the story, once the disciples identify the stranger as Jesus, he disappears. In other words, once the disciples saw it was Jesus, risen from the dead, he disappeared, but more importantly, they made the connection that he was the risen Lord and Son of the Living God. They finally understood what that meant for their lives and for the life of the whole world.

These two disciples, who had planned to spend the night in Emmaus, suddenly had an adrenaline rush of epic proportions, and they ran all the way back to Jerusalem (that’s more than 10K, by the way). But before they could tell the group Jesus had appeared to them, they heard Jesus had also appeared to the others in the upper room. The rush of adrenalin and the burning in their hearts spurred them to spread this incredibly good news first with each other and then to the whole world.

With hearts racing and eyes opened, we too welcome our resurrected Savior! Or do we? When was the last time coming to church to meet the risen Christ and to hear, one more time, the Words of Eternal Life given you an adrenalin rush of epic proportion? Just like the adrenalin junkie who keeps going back to the athletic field, or the race car driver always trying to go a little faster, I want the rush I can only get from meeting Jesus and touching his body, tasting his real flesh and drinking his blood that was spilled for me. In that instant I see Jesus clear as I’m ever going to be able in this life and just when I do, he vanishes. He’s gone faster than the Fate of the Furious… (For those who don’t follow the movies, that’s a reference to the current movie playing at the theaters from the Fast and the Furious franchise.) Jesus is gone in a flash, but the rush I feel knowing I’ve just experienced my Lord still makes my heart burn within me and keeps me coming back for more. I long for the day when Jesus won’t disappear the moment I see with the eyes of my heart that he’s real. I want to be able to walk with him on the road and to be completely engulfed by his presence.

I know I can have and I do have many conversations with God in the Name of Jesus, but I long for the day I’ll see him in the flesh and eat with him at the banquet where he’s the host. As much as I love receiving Jesus in Holy Communion, I know it’s only a foretaste of the feast to come and that’s what I want. That’s the ultimate adrenalin rush that doesn’t come and then go just as fast as it came. It lasts forever!

I hope I get the chance to cross off both of those adrenalin producing adventures before I join the great cloud of witnesses, but if not, I know the greatest of all adventure awaits us in God’s presence for all of eternity… May the adrenalin rush of seeing Jesus, if only for an instant keep us longing for more until the day when we all are gathered around God’s Throne and worship Him in truth and spirit. May we have our eyes opened today to recognize the risen Lord Jesus Christ in the breaking of the bread and in the words of eternal life spoken for you. Amen.